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STRICTURES ON SOME PASSAGES IN THE DISSERTATION BY SIR JAMES MACKINTOSH, PREFIXED TO THE ENCYCLOPÆDIA BRITANNICA.,

7. d 31

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TO THE READER.

I WROTE remarks on Sir James's Dissertation, when copies of it were first distributed to his friends; before it was regularly published, as one of the preliminary discourses of the Encyclopædia Britannica;—induced to do so, by my belief, that the confusion into which he had thrown the science of Ethics was calculated to do great injury to the minds of such young inquirers as might resort to his work for instruction; and my fear that the puffing, on the part both of himself and his friends, which had so successfully served the author through life, and the reputation he thence enjoyed, would procure a temporary and unfortunate celebrity to a deleterious production.

I had made my remarks in the form of letters to the author. And they were written with that severity of reprehension which the first feelings of indignation against an evil-doer inspire.

From accidental circumstances the publication was delayed, till the death of Sir James. The form of letters to himself then appeared incon-

gruous. And I also felt reluctant, under the feelings which that event inspired, to speak so harshly as I had done of a man who could no longer appear in his own defence.

The form of the writing was therefore to be changed. The return to the work, after the warmth of the original feeling was over, was repulsive. Leisure was wanting. The Dissertation had not excited the public attention, and was not likely to do so. There no longer appeared a motive for taking any trouble about it.

After a season, however, leisure for looking at what I had written, and a motive for doing so, having occurred, I was induced by the perusal to believe, that the state of the science of morals, and of the public mind in regard to it, presented a call for the corrections which I had endeavoured to apply to the most hurtful of the prevalent misapprehensions, and the exposition which I had presented of the more important truths. And the publication, in its present form, is the result of that persuasion.

I was drawn to the selection I have made of the parts of the Dissertation on which I have animadverted (it would have been intolerable to go through with the whole), by my opinion of their relative importance. Among the subjects which Sir James has maltreated, the passages I have examined appeared to present to us those on which it was most desirable that the public

mind should be set right; and they were among the passages which furnished the most instructive specimens of the vices in Sir James's mode of writing, from which it were good that future writers should, by dread of punishment, be deterred.

In executing my design, I have been embarrassed between two desires, which I have found it very difficult to reconcile; the desire of being perspicuous, and the desire of being short. To be perspicuous, it seemed that the exposition of all the topics of moral philosophy should be introduced. To avoid tediousness, it seemed that almost every thing of this kind ought to be excluded. My fear now is, that I have done too much for brevity; and that I shall often be with difficulty understood, as well by supposing a knowledge of principles which I ought to have explained, as by abridging my exposure of the lip-work we have from Sir James. I am thus in danger of incurring two reproaches; that of tediousness, from which the nature of my subject does not permit me to escape; and that of obscurity, which I may have deserved, by endeavouring to make the call on my reader's patience as little grievous to him as possible.

I have placed the subjects in the order in which that which precedes is calculated to aid in the ready apprehension of that which follows. It will therefore be for the convenience of

those who may deem the following pages worthy of their attention, to carry their perusal regularly from beginning to end; as part of what is necessary for the elucidation of the subsequent passages will often be found to have been anticipated in those which precede.

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ON

MACKINTOSH.

SECTION I.

Sir James on a great Philosophical Error.

SIR James says, that moral inquiries "relate to at least two perfectly distinct subjects. 1. The nature of the distinction between right and wrong in human conduct; and, 2. The nature of those feelings with which right and wrong are contemplated by human beings." *

Sir James does not go the length of claiming this distinction as his own. But he says expressly that nobody but himself has understood the value of it.

The first of the two subjects he calls, "the nature of the distinction between right and wrong." The nature of the *distinction between*

* Dissert. Sect. I.

two things depends (does it not?) upon the nature of the things distinguished. The things to be distinguished here are, *right*, and *wrong*. We must therefore know *what* right is, and *what* wrong, before we can know what the difference between them is.

He gives us another expression for the same thing. He says the investigation of "the nature of the *distinction* BETWEEN right and wrong in human conduct," is the same with "investigation into the criterion of morality in action."

This expression is not more satisfactory than the former. The word *criterion* commonly means something by which another thing is tried, or tested, and shown to be what it is. Thus chemists have a number of tests or *criteria* by which they determine what things are, one to test an alkali, another an acid; and so on. But what thing is it by which we test morality? And, above all, because that is the previous question, what is morality? A test, is a test of a thing known, not of a thing unknown. When a man desires a touchstone, a test, or criterion of gold, he knows beforehand what gold is—he only knows not whether such a piece of matter be gold or not. The test does not show what gold is; so neither does a test of morality show what morality is. When we know morality, we shall not be much in difficulty about the criterion of it.

"Morality in action" is Sir James's expression.

And, as usual with Sir James's expressions, it is ambiguous. When we speak of a thing in action, we commonly mean a thing acting. A hand in action, is a hand acting; a mind in action, is a mind acting. When Sir James speaks of morality in action, does he mean morality acting? I conclude not; because when I ask myself what morality not acting is—I cannot find an answer. Morality not acting appears to me to be the negation of morality.

There is another meaning we can suppose; and that is, the morality which is in an action: as we say the smell which is in a rose. Did Sir James then imagine, that there is morality in anything else? Did he mean to speak of the morality which is in action, as distinct from a morality which is not in action? When we say morality, we name an attribute of action.

But then we need to be informed what that attribute is. Sir James says, the business of the moral inquirer is to find out the criterion of it. But the criterion of a thing does not tell us what it is—it only ascertains whether such or such a thing be the thing in question or not.

The only hypothesis by which I can annex anything like a meaning to the words of Sir James, is by supposing that he has misapplied the word criterion; that he means by "the criterion of morality in action," the moral quality of the act; that, whatever it be, on account of

which we call it right, moral, good. Sir James's proposition in this sense is, that the criterion of morality is morality. We shall find, as we go on, other propositions of Sir James, of the same description.

Well, Sir James says, this quality of actions, this something, in or belonging to action, is one thing, which deserves our inquiry; and we fully agree with him.

Another thing, as he says, is, the feelings which men have, when this something is perceived or contemplated by them. We agree with him, that this is another thing. But we do not agree with him, that inquiry into this thing, except as an object of philosophical curiosity, is a matter of equal importance. We rather lean to the opinion of Adam Smith, that it is a matter of very inferior importance.

We are of opinion also, in direct opposition to Sir James, who thinks he has had a master's hand, in establishing the duality of these things, that it never was mistaken, or could be, by any man in his senses. The acts of Nero were acts of a man in Italy, who lived nearly 2,000 years ago; the feelings with which I regard them are the feelings of a man now living in England. Who is capable of taking one of these things for the other?

This confusion in the mind of Sir James was wrought, no doubt, by ambiguity of terms. The

term "moral sentiments" either means the compound of feelings, in the breast of the actor, from which the action proceeds, being, in truth, the very morality of the act; or it means the sentiments raised in the breast of him who perceives or contemplates the act. That is, one and the same phrase is a name for each of the two things, about the distinguishing of which Sir James makes such a noise.

That Sir James was not foremost in making the distinction between acts, and the sentiments raised in the breasts of those who see or hear of them, is hardly worth mentioning for its own sake. It is, however, of importance on account of those who need to be put on their guard against imposing pretensions.

"In treating of the principles of morals," says Adam Smith, "there are two questions to be considered. First, wherein does virtue consist? Or what is the tone of temper and tenor of conduct, which constitute the excellent and praise-worthy character, the character which is the natural object of esteem, honour, and approbation? And, secondly, by what power or faculty in the mind is it, that this character, whatever it be, is recommended to us? Or in other words, how and by what means does it come to pass, that the mind prefers one tenor of conduct to another, denominates the one right and the other wrong; considers the one as the

object of approbation, honour, and reward; and the other of blame, censure, and punishment?"

Had Sir James read this, he could not have imagined that he had pointed out the two subjects more distinctly; though there is by no means, even in the words of Smith, that philosophical precision which the nature of the subject required.

Smith goes on to illustrate his meaning: "We examine the first question when we consider whether virtue consists in benevolence, as Dr. Hutchison imagines; or in acting suitably to the different relations we stand in, as Dr. Clarke supposes; or in the wise and prudent pursuit of our own real and solid happiness, as has been the opinion of others."

With this, Smith leaves the illustration of the first question, and adds the following illustration of the second: "We examine the second question, when we consider whether the virtuous character, whatever it consists in, be recommended to us by self-love, which makes us perceive that this character, both in ourselves and others, tends most to promote our own private interest; or by reason, which points out to us the difference between one character and another, in the same manner as it does that between truth and falsehood; or by a peculiar power of perception, called a moral sense, which this character gratifies and pleases, as the contrary disgusts and displeases

it; or, last of all, by some other principle in human nature, such as a modification of sympathy or the like."

See also the Preliminary Dissertation to Law's translation of King on the Origin of Evil; first paragraph, &c.

Hutchison begins his Inquiry concerning Moral Good and Evil, with these words: "The word moral goodness in this treatise, denotes our idea of some quality apprehended in action, which procures approbation and love toward the actor from those who receive no advantage by the action." Had not this writer a clear conception that the quality of the action was one thing, the feelings it called forth in others toward the actor, a different thing?

Dr. Reid says, Essays on the Active Powers, Essay 3, chap. 5: "I shall first offer some observations with regard to the general notion of duty, and its contrary, or of right and wrong in human conduct; and then consider how we come to judge and determine certain things in human conduct to be right, and others to be wrong." Here what is right and wrong in human conduct; and the sentiments with which we regard right and wrong, are pointed out as two subjects of inquiry. And in the beginning of the 6th chapter, after having discussed the question what is right and wrong, he says, "We are next to

consider how we learn to judge and determine, that this is right and that wrong.

"Some philosophers, with whom I agree, ascribe this to an original power or faculty in man, which they call the moral sense, moral faculty, conscience. Others think, that our moral sentiments may be accounted for without supposing any original sense or faculty appropriated to that purpose, and go into very different systems, to account for them."

In estimating Sir James, it is good to elucidate this point very perfectly. Dugald Stewart says: "The questions about which the theory of morals is employed are chiefly the two following: First, by what *principle* of our constitution are we led to form the notion of moral distinctions,—whether by the faculty which perceives the distinction between truth and falsehood, in the other branches of human knowledge, or by a peculiar power of perception (called by some the moral sense), which is *pleased* with one set of qualities and *displeased* with another? Secondly, what is the proper object of moral approbation; or, in other words, what is the common quality or qualities belonging to all the different modes of virtue? Is it benevolence, or a rational self-love, or a disposition (resulting from the ascendant of reason over passion) to act suitably to the different relations in which we are placed? These

two questions seem to exhaust the whole theory of morals."—Active and Moral Powers, B. 2, ch. 5. Introd.

Take also Dr. Brown, who saw further than D. Stewart and Sir James: "We may speak of the fulfilment of duty, virtue, propriety, merit, &c., and we may ascribe these variously to the action, and to him who performed it; but whether we speak of the action or of the agent, we mean nothing more, than that a certain feeling of moral approbation has been excited in our mind by the contemplation of a certain intentional production, in certain circumstances, of a certain amount of benefit or injury."—Lecture 27, p. 530.

What was the state of mind of a man who could affirm, that the discrimination of the moral quality of acts, and the sentiments with which it is regarded, has seldom been made by philosophers?

This accusation of the philosophers in general, Sir James presses home upon two of them, specially, and by name. These are, Paley, and Bentham. He proves that they confound the quality of an act with the sentiment in the mind which regards it, by the following process: they resolve morality into utility, and they reject a moral sense; therefore, says Sir James, they confound moral approbation with the object of it.

Between the premises and the conclusion there is no connexion.

But let us hear Sir James. "Dr. Paley repre-

sents the principle of a moral sense as being opposed to that of utility. Now it is evident that this representation is founded on a confusion of the two questions which have been above stated."

Reader! is this evident to you?

But Sir James will tell what makes it evident. "That we are endued with a moral sense, or, in other words, a faculty which immediately approves what is right, and condemns what is wrong, is only a statement of the feelings with which we contemplate actions. But to affirm that right actions are those which conduce to the well-being of mankind, is a proposition concerning the outward effects by which right actions themselves may be recognized." The meaning of this appears to be, that the affirmation of Paley about utility, is an affirmation respecting the action; but the affirmation about the moral sense is an affirmation respecting the mind of the spectator; a different thing. Two affirmations, however, about two different things, have no bearing one upon another; the truth or falsehood of the one implies nothing as to the truth or falsehood of the other. When Paley, therefore, supposed an inconsistency between the doctrine of utility, and that of the moral sense, he confounded the object of moral approbation with the approbation itself.

There is a small matter here, which Sir James has overlooked, though it is that upon which the

fate of his argumentation depends. He says, the affirmation of a moral sense, is an affirmation only with respect to the mind of him who is thinking of the act.

There is not one of the theories of morals, of which Sir James has a tolerable comprehension. The affirmation of a moral sense is an affirmation with respect to the act, as well as with respect to the mind of the person who thinks of the act. And its affirmation with respect to the act, is a positive denial of the doctrine of utility. It affirms that moral distinctions need a particular faculty to discern them. Utility and its elements, however, need no particular faculty to discern them; the common feelings, and common understanding suffice. Paley, therefore, was right in considering the affirmation of a moral sense as inconsistent with the position that utility is the moral quality of actions.

As the imputation of Sir James on Mr. Bentham rests on the same process of reasoning, it is unnecessary to consider it. Neither he, nor Paley, confounded moral approbation with the object of it; and to say that they did so, because they said that the theory of utility, and the theory of the moral sense, are incompatible theories, is only to show that the speaker is ignorant of the subject.

It is useful to exhibit here what Sir James says to implicate Leibnitz in this accusation. It occurs

at the end of the article Cumberland, in Sect. 4, and illustrates Sir James's care of accuracy, in stating either matter of fact, or matter of opinion.

"It is little wonder that Cumberland should not have disembroiled this ancient and established confusion, since Leibnitz himself, in a passage where he reviews the theories of morals which had gone before him, has done his utmost to perpetuate it. 'It is a question,' says he, 'whether the preservation of human society be the first principle of the law of nature. This our author denies, in opposition to Grotius, who laid down sociability to be so; to Hobbes, who ascribed that character to mutual fear; and to Cumberland, who held that it was mutual benevolence; which are all three only different names for the safety and welfare of society.' Here the great philosopher considered benevolence or fear, two feelings of the human mind, to be the first principles of the law of nature, in the same sense in which the tendency of certain actions to the well-being of the community may be so regarded. The confusion, however, was then common to him with many, as it even now is with most. The comprehensive view was his own."—Encyclo. Britan. vol. i. p. 324. ed. 7th.

Scarcely one of all these assertions is correct.

In the passage referred to, Leibnitz does not "review the theories of morals which had gone before him" (*theories going before a man*; who

but Sir J. would thus have expressed himself?) nor had a thought of doing any such thing. He is giving a short account, in a familiar letter to a friend, of a book which had just appeared—*De Principio Juris Naturalis.* After mentioning several other things discussed in the book, he says, *Quæritur deinde, utrum custodia societatis humanæ sit principium juris.* And he adds, *Id negat vir egregius* (the author) *contra Grotium qui societatem, Hobbesium qui mutuum metum, Cumberlandium et similes qui mutuam benevolentiam, id est, semper societatem, adhibent.* Who does not see, that Sir James has mistranslated the passage, and as well by the translation as the comment, that he knew neither the meaning, nor object of it? First of all, the proposition is not the proposition of Leibnitz, but of the author of whom he is speaking, who removes this opinion of the *principium juris,* viz., that it was *custodia humanæ societatis,* in which opinion he considered that Grotius, Hobbes, and Cumberland, with others, coincided; in order to establish his own opinion, that it is the will of God, *jussum Creatoris.* But when this author thought that the *principium juris* was not this *custodia,* and when Grotius, Hobbes, and Cumberland thought that it was, there is no necessity that any one of them should have confounded the moral quality of actions, with the feelings of which those actions are the exciting cause? "Here the great phi-

losopher considered benevolence or fear, to be the first principles of the law of nature." This is almost incredible. First, it is not the thought of Leibnitz, but Leibnitz's statement of another man's thought, which is "here" at all. And then, most assuredly, that other man did not impute to Grotius and Hobbes, the absurdity of considering benevolence or fear to be the first principles of the law of nature; because, for one thing, he was not speaking of the law of nature at all, but of the *principium juris.*

It is not easy to know what Sir James meant either by "principles" or "laws of nature." One would suppose the law of nature was the principle of every thing else.

Laws of nature are of two sorts; laws of physical or corporeal nature, and those of mental nature; powers of body being denoted by the one term, powers of mind by the other.

But neither of these sets of powers has any first principles; and certainly nobody would say that benevolence and fear are the first principles of either.

Perhaps Sir James meant laws of society, agreeable to nature; namely, those laws which men in society impose upon themselves for their common advantage. But when Sir James calls them laws of nature, what nature does he mean? I conclude the nature of man; because, in any other acceptation, his words are without sense.

The law of nature must therefore mean the laws prescribed by man's nature. But the laws prescribed by man's nature are, of course, the laws tending to human good, whether they be laws actually fixed by any society for its own use, or not. The law of nature therefore in this case, and the principle of utility, are the same. But what can be meant by Sir James, when he talks of the principles of this law! This law is the principle of all other law. What can he mean, when he says the "great philosopher" (*proprio nomine* Leibnitz) considered benevolence or fear to be the first principles of this principle; *i. e.* the first principles of the principle of utility?

But whatever Sir James gives us to do in finding out *his* meaning, it is very easy to see what the author spoken of by Leibnitz designated by his *principium juris*. He meant by its *principium*, that to which it owed its origin, that on account of which it was brought into being.—That on account of which, according to some, it was brought into being, was the guardianship of human society. To that society, men were led, according to Grotius, by their expectation of good from one another; according to Hobbes, by their fear of harm from one another; but in whatsoever way they were led to it, they did value its preservation, and seeing the necessity of law for that end, gave existence to law accordingly. And these opinions assuredly both Grotius and Hobbes

might hold, without believing, as Sir James would have it, that "benevolence or fear are the first principles of the law of nature." Sir James adds; "in the same sense in which the tendency of certain actions to the well-being of the community may be so regarded." Let us try to find, if we can, a meaning for this. The sentence put together stands thus: Leibnitz "considered benevolence or fear the first principles of the law of nature: in the same sense in which the tendency of certain actions to the well-being of the community may be so regarded." There are here two subjects, and one predicate. The predicate is, "regarded as the first principles of the law of nature." The first of the two subjects is, "benevolence or fear;" the second is, "the tendency of certain actions to the well-being of the community." Of both, Sir James says, it may be predicated, that they are the first principles of the law of nature. "In the same sense," Sir James says. But what is it that must be in the same sense? The phrase must of necessity be construed either with the subjects, or the predicate. If with the subjects, the sense will be, that benevolence or fear, and the tendency of actions, are the same thing; if with the predicate, he declares that if the words "first principles of the laws of nature," be understood both times in the same sense, they may be predicated, according to Leibnitz, both of "benevolence or fear,"

and also of "the beneficial tendency of actions."

Sir James did not understand the passage. Among the questions discussed by the anonymous author, one, says Leibnitz, was, whether the safeguard of society, meaning a care for its safety, was the origin of law, or that to which law owed its *principium?* This opinion he denied, says Leibnitz,—in opposition to Grotius, who maintained the sociability of men—and to Hobbes, who maintained the fears men have of one another. The expressions are elliptical. Grotius ascribed the origin of human society to the social dispositions of men, Hobbes to their fears. But whether men valued society for their loves or their fears, in either case they would seek the preservation of that which they valued; and therefore would establish laws. Benevolence, according to Grotius; fear, according to Hobbes, was the *principium societatis humanæ;* and the *custodia societatis humanæ,* i.e. the desire of that *custodia,* and the knowledge of what was required for it, was the *principium juris,* or the cause why it began to exist.

It is strange that Sir James saw in this any thing like a confusion of the ideas of a moral action, and of the state of mind of him who contemplates it.

Sir James never omits an opportunity which he either finds, or can make, of panegyric on a popular name.

"The confusion," says Sir James, "was common to him (Leibnitz) with many, as it even now is with most" (what an assertion!) "The comprehensive view was his own." In the first place, there was no confusion, on the part of any body. In the next place, there is no view of Leibnitz here at all, whether comprehensive or contracted; another man's sentiments, and not his, being alone represented. And in the third place, where is the comprehension of the view; when, speaking of a controversy on a single point, Leibnitz does nothing but mention three names of those who maintained one of the sides in the controversy? But Sir James knew, that the term, "a comprehensive view," was a panegyrical term; he knew also that the name of Leibnitz was a name of repute. That was enough for Sir James to put the two together.

SECTION II.

Sir James on Hobbes.

HOBBES is a great name in philosophy; on account both of the value of what he taught, and the extraordinary impulse which he communicated to the spirit of free inquiry in Europe.

The controversies roused by the daring attack of Luther on the established religion had deeply, for a considerable time, engaged the minds of men, on the great questions relating to the Creator, and his revelations to mankind. Philosophy, physical, mental, or political, was hardly an object of attention. A series of dogmas, handed down by authority, were passively received; and the very idea of inquiring into the foundation of them, seemed to have passed away from the minds of men. Even the great effort of Bacon, to point the views of men to the proper object of physical inquiry, and to make them ardent in the pursuit, had not yet produced any considerable effects. With respect to the mental, and physical sciences, they were hardly regarded as objects of inquiry. The opinions of Aristotle were taught, as a branch of education; and the possession of them in the

memory was all that even the most instructed men imagined they had any occasion to desire.

In this benumbed and torpid state of the human mind, the appearance of such a man as Hobbes, who challenged so many received and fundamental opinions, and exhibited his own views, with evidence and brevity, was calculated to produce very extraordinary effects. It is hardly, as Sir James somewhere acknowledges, too much to say, that the character of modern speculation was to a great degree determined by the writings of Hobbes.

Works of this importance assuredly required, in an historical view of moral philosophy, to be very carefully expounded;—their matter to be luminously displayed, its value accurately appreciated, and the effects produced by its promulgation profoundly investigated.

Toward this Sir James has done three things.

I. He tells us what were the causes of the influence obtained by the writings of Hobbes.

II. He gives us an account of his philosophy.

III. He makes remarks on the philosophy.

I. *He tells us what were the causes of his influence.* They were these:—

1. His genius for system.
2. His dogmatism.
3. The goodness of his style.

These things, says Sir James, account for his influence.

II. *He gives us an account of Hobbes's philosophy.*

1. It is cold. Hobbes shows no feeling but arrogance.

2. Hobbes's moral system was established for the sake of his political; and his political was this—that the ends of government are best attained by the rule of one man, to whom unlimited obedience is secured.

This is Sir James's account of Hobbes's philosophy.

III. *His remarks on the philosophy*, meaning his objections to it, are the following:—

1. Hobbes does not distinguish thought from feeling.

2. He makes desires instances of objects deliberately pursued.

3. He strikes the affections out of human nature; and does not recognize the moral sentiments.

4. It results from this that personal advantage is the only motive.

5. Acknowledging with all men, the utility of morals, and the coincidence of private and public good, Hobbes wants moral sensibility; which leads him to the principle of utility, a pernicious error.

This is all which Sir James has to say to us, on the subject of Hobbes's philosophy.

A man could not give a more signal proof of incapacity for the work he had undertaken. There

is not a single thought of any the smallest value in the article; though a finer scope for the reflections of a superior mind is not afforded by any name in the annals of philosophy.

I. The causes which he assigns for the influence of the writings of Hobbes, are first presented to our notice.

"He owed his influence," says Sir James, "to various causes; at the head of which may be placed that genius for system, which, though it cramps the growth of knowledge, perhaps finally atones for that mischief, by the zeal and activity which it rouses among followers and opponents."

First of all, we need to understand what Sir James means by "the spirit of system;" which produces so much evil, but at the same time so much good, that Sir James declares he knows not which preponderates.

Sir James gives us something of a clue to his meaning; but unhappily that clue leads to two meanings.

In a note on the words "it cramps the growth of knowledge," he gives us a quotation from Bacon, whom he cannot pass without a smearing from his brush, and absurdly calls him "the Master of Wisdom."

"Another error is the over-early and peremptory reduction of knowledge into arts and methods, from which time it commonly receives small augmentation. Method, carrying a show of total and

perfect knowledge, has a tendency to generate acquiescence;" (*Advancement of Learning.*) Upon which Sir James is in an ecstacy. And exclaims, with a mark of admiration,—"What pregnant words!"

Every man acquainted with the writings of Bacon knows well what he means. It is the syllogistic method, which he is speaking of. This had been often considered as an all-sufficient instrument for the discovery of truth. It was necessary for Bacon to show that it was not; and that such "arts and methods" if too peremptory, and made too early, are apt to do harm. But this is wholly inapplicable to Hobbes. Sir James's talk is perfectly beside the matter. To no man that ever wrote could the spirit of system, in this sense, be less truly ascribed, than to Hobbes. It is evident that Sir James did not understand the words which he quoted from "the Master of Wisdom."

There is another expression of Sir James, which points to another meaning of his "spirit of system."

In the sentence next to that I have quoted above, he says, "A system which attempts a task so hard as that of subjecting vast provinces of human knowledge to one or two principles, if it presents some striking conformity to superficial appearances, is sure to delight the framer; and for a time, to subdue and captivate the

student too entirely for sober reflection and rigorous examination."

Sir James's habit of talking loosely was so complete and blinding, that he did not perceive when he was, or was not, expressing his own opinion. He affirms here, that a system (aiming, as he describes it, at the true end of philosophy), delights its framer, and subdues his followers, only if it is bad. This seems extraordinary, but observe how true. He says, that the system delights and subdues, under one condition; that is, if it presents some striking instances of conformity to superficial appearances. What Sir James meant to say may be guessed at. He meant to say that the system delights and captivates, if it does what he says, though it is so imperfect as to do nothing more. He has in reality said something nearly the opposite.

Endeavouring "to subject vast provinces of human knowledge to one or two principles," is that which Sir James now presents to us, as what he means by the spirit of system. The propensity to express himself badly is more unrelaxing in Sir James than in any other man. He begins by making a system the agent. "A system," he says, "which attempts subjecting," &c. Sir James forgets that the system is the thing made, not the maker. A system is the arrangement, by some man or men, of a certain number of ideas, in a certain order, for a certain

end. A system is a system, as well when its ideas are arranged under many, as under few heads.

After the absurdity of making the system a system-maker, the complaint against a system, of its "subjecting vast provinces of human knowledge to one or two principles," broadly displays the absence of all correct ideas in the mind of Sir James.

There are two very important philosophical operations to which Sir James may have applied his term, "subjecting vast provinces of human knowledge to one or two principles."

First, the operation of classing; when the philosopher endeavours to range the objects of his consideration under heads, and as many of them as possible under one head; so that he may obtain propositions true of as great a number of them as possible. Such propositions are found to be of the greatest utility. And the man who in this way subjects the largest province of human knowledge to the fewest principles, is universally esteemed the most successful philosopher. This is what Plato conceived to be the very business of philosophy. This is what he called "seeing the one in the many," and "the many in the one." And he said he would follow to the end of the world, the man whom he should discover to be a master in that art.

Secondly, the operation of expounding the laws of nature. This consists wholly in tracing phenomena to their general laws, that is, referring as many of them as possible to the operation of a single cause; and the more extensive that operation—that is to say, the more comprehensive the law which the philosopher has discovered; or, in Sir James's language, the larger the province of human knowledge which he has subjected to a single principle; the more completely has he accomplished his important purpose, and the greater the admiration and applause which he has earned.

That in this province Hobbes rendered most important service is true; though Sir James was totally ignorant of it. For he represents him as a man who was taken in, by "some striking instances of conformity to superficial appearances."

If Sir James says, that it was this superficiality of Hobbes which contributed to his reputation, it is nonsense. If he says, that it was the power with which he traced the phenomena of the human mind to their general laws; he told us what we need not thank him for,—that the merit of Hobbes was one of the causes of his success. What should contribute to a man's success more than his merit? It is the natural, and best cause of success.

Sir James's dissertation on Hobbes's spirit of system is a sad specimen of a philosopher.

The dogmatism of Hobbes, Sir James gives as the next among the causes of his fame.

Two things Sir James has mistaken here. In the first place, there is no peculiar dogmatism in Hobbes. And in the next place, dogmatism in a writer never was a cause of fame. In a speaker, or a talker, an air of assurance often gains an opinion of knowledge. Not so, in the written page, which a reader has before him for cool consideration. There, an appearance of demanding our submission, without cause, inspires disgust, and often obscures substantial merit.

It is reported of Hobbes, that, in conversation, he was impatient of contradiction; which in a man of deep internal thought, unless he is also much practised in conversation, that is, in hearing and replying to the undigested thoughts of others, is a very natural infirmity, not easy to be avoided. From this Sir James has been pleased to infer, that Hobbes is dogmatical in his writings. Sir James evidently was unacquainted with these writings; and spoke of them, as of most other writings, at second hand. There is nothing of dogmatism in the writings of Hobbes. But the mind of Hobbes was a mind of perfect simplicity and truth. What was his thought, he set down as his thought, directly and clearly, without the mumblings of Sir James, who hardly writes a sentence which he does not preface with a "perhaps." Hobbes in every instance knew his

own thought with accuracy, and gave it for what it was. Sir James the contrary; and therefore he generally hesitates about pronouncing it. This he no doubt flattered himself was graceful modesty. The fact, however, is, that Hobbes is a very unpretending writer; and Sir James one of the most offensively pretending that ever put pen to paper.

Hobbes begins his Treatise of Human Nature, in these words:—"The true and perspicuous explication of the elements of laws natural, and politic (which is my present scope), dependeth upon the knowledge of what is human nature, what is body politic, and what it is we call a law; concerning which points, as the writings of men from antiquity downwards have still increased, so also have the doubts and controversies concerning the same. And seeing that true knowledge begetteth not doubt nor controversy, it is manifest from the present controversies, that they which have written heretofore thereof, have not well understood their own subject.

"Harm I can do none, though I err no less than they; for I shall leave men but as they are, in doubt and dispute. But, intending not to take any principle upon trust; but only to put men in mind of what they know already, or may know by their own experience, I hope to err the less. And when I do, it must proceed from too hasty concluding, which I will endeavour, as much as I can, to avoid."

This is real modesty; modesty without affectation; which he never discredits in a single page of his book.

There is a passage in the introduction to the Leviathan, so much in the same spirit, and so pregnant with various instruction, that I think it will be agreeable to the reader to have it before him.

"There is a saying much usurped of late, that *Wisdome* is acquired, not by reading of *Books*, but *Men*. Consequently whereunto, those persons, that for the most part can give no other proof of being wise, take great delight to show what they think they have read in men, by uncharitable censures of one another behind their backs. But there is another saying not of late understood, by which they might learn truly to read one another, if they would take the pains; and that is, *Nosce teipsum, Read thyself:* which was not meant, as it is now used, to countenance, either the barbarous state of men in power, towards their inferiors; or to encourage men of low degree, to a sawcie behaviour towards their betters; but to teach us, that for the similitude of the thoughts, and passions of one man, to the thoughts, and passions of another, whosoever looketh into himself, and considereth what he doth, when he does *think, opine, reason, hope, feare*, &c., and upon what grounds; he shall thereby read and know what are the thoughts,

and passions of all other men, upon the like occasions. I say the similitude of *passions*, which are the same in all men, *desire, feare, hope,* &c., not the similitude of the *objects* of the passions, which are the things *desired, feared, hoped,* &c.: for these the constitution individuall, and particular education do so vary, and they are so easie to be kept from our knowledge, that the characters of man's heart, blotted and confounded as they are, with dissembling, lying, counterfeiting, and erroneous doctrines, are legible onely to him that searcheth hearts. And though by men's actions wee do discover their designe sometimes; yet to do it without comparing them with our own, and distinguishing all circumstances, by which the case may come to be altered, is to decypher without a key, and be for the most part deceived, by too much trust, or by too much diffidence; as he that reads, is himself a good or evill man.

" But let one man read another by his actions never so perfectly, it serves him onely with his acquaintance, which are but few. He that is to govern a whole nation, must read in himself, not this, or that particular man; but man-kind: which though it be hard to do, harder than to learn any language, or science; yet, when I shall have set down my own reading orderly, and perspicuously, the pains left another, will be onely to consider, if he also find not the same in

himself. For this kind of doctrine admitteth no other demonstration."

It is not easy to find the genuine spirit of philosophical inquiry, which is the reverse of dogmatism, more truly expressed than in these words. And no man acquainted with the writings of Hobbes will affirm that they are not throughout in character with what is here professed.

Sir James's descant on the subject of Hobbes's dogmatism, is instructive. To attempt any great improvement in the region of thought, "commonly requires," says Sir James, "an overweening conceit of the superiority of a man's own judgment." This is a reproach cast upon the pursuit of knowledge. It was in a very different spirit that Bacon and Locke urged on the human mind, to break the shackles of authority, and to trust to its native strength. This is in the taste of Oxford and Cambridge; who dread inquiry, and do all that in them lies, to crush the spirit of it. A man, like Sir James, who never knew the ground of an opinion in his life, and never held one but upon trust, may well think it arrogant to espouse, as Sir James expresses it, "very singular notions;" that is, to differ from the common herd. But the man who looks at opinions through the reasons of them; when he arrives at a truth which he sees to be founded on evidence, and publishes because he

believes it important; is not for that reason arrogant; he is only public spirited and brave. An attack upon such a spirit, of which, unfortunately for mankind, the specimens are yet but few, is as low in the intellectual point of view, as it is in the moral.

Sir James goes on; "The dogmatism of Hobbes has indeed one quality more offensive than that of most others. Propositions the most adverse to the opinions of mankind, and the most abhorrent from their feelings, are introduced into the course of his argument with mathematical coldness. He presents them as demonstrated conclusions, without deigning to explain to his fellow creatures how they all happened to believe the opposite absurdities."

Sir James was utterly incapable of conceiving the state of mind of such a man as Hobbes. Hobbes had no other object than to set down distinctly the thoughts which had been suggested to him by his study of human nature, with as much of the evidence of each as was compatible with the great compression of his plan; "to set down," as he himself expresses it, "his own reading of human nature, orderly and perspicuously;" after which he considered that his task was done: "For this kind of doctrine," says he, "admitteth no other demonstration."

The very perfection of the philosophical style, the utmost degree of simplicity, compactness, and

perspicuity, combined, the purest transcript of thought, which words seem capable of being rendered, is stigmatised by Sir James, as " cold ;" a word of great reproach with Sir James. And the spirit of simplicity and sincerity, with which a great mind delivers its thoughts to others in the very shape in which it holds them, without the affectation of a thousand apologies for the impudence of differing a hair's-breadth from those who had never thought upon the subject, is charged upon Hobbes, as the arrogance of one who despises mankind. It is clear and conclusive evidence of the contrary.

It is worth while to remark, in connection with " Sir James on Dogmatism," what Hobbes says of it. " There be two sorts of men that commonly be called learned. One is that sort that proceedeth evidently from humble principles, as is described in the last section, and these men are called *Mathematici*. The other are they that take up maxims, from their education, and from the authority of men, or of custom ; and take the habitual discourse of the tongue for ratiocination : and these are called *Dogmatici*. Now seeing those we call *Mathematici* are absolved of the crime of breeding controversy ; and they that pretend not to learning cannot be accused ; the fault lieth altogether in the *Dogmatici*, that is to say, those that are imperfectly learned, and with passion press to have their

opinions pass every where for truth, without any evident demonstration, either from experience, or from places of Scripture of uncontradicted interpretation."—Human Nature, ch. 13.

So much for two out of the three causes of the success of Hobbes. Sir James tells us that his style was the third. And then he pronounces a panegyric upon his style which it well deserves.

But the style of Hobbes, though admirable for its purpose, was the very reverse of a popular style. It has a charm for the man who is looking out for thoughts; because it gives them to him at once, and effectually; but it is repulsive to the common-place reader; and can have done nothing towards gaining admirers from the throng. No; if there had not been other causes of the success of Hobbes, his manner as a writer would have confined his works to the closets of the few.

II. We next receive the account of Hobbes's philosophy.

This ought to be sufficient, at the least, to remind us accurately of the doctrines maintained by Hobbes; the grounds on which he maintained them; the mode in which he connected them together, so as to compose a whole; and the point of view in which the subject must have been presented to him, in order to draw his thoughts into that peculiar train which his writings present to us.

The first thing which Sir James tells us under this head is, "That his philosophical writings might be read without reminding any one that the author was more than an intellectual machine. They never betray a feeling except that insupportable arrogance, which looks down on men as a lower species of beings." Such a feeling as this, most certainly they do not betray. So that Sir James's negation of feeling may be stript of his solitary exception.

This, however, is at best only a criticism upon the *manner* in which Hobbes delivered his philosophy. To the matter of it, with which alone he had here to do, it is altogether foreign.

But whether is it said, in praise, or in blame? That Sir James's words determine not. If said in praise, it is very high praise. It says that, in treating of intellectual objects, Hobbes dealt with them according to their nature, and did not pollute them by any heterogeneous admixture.

We know, however, by experience, that when Sir James talks of want of feeling, he talks of it as a great blemish. He cannot bear that intellectual things should be spoken of in the language of intellect. A clear expression of a clear idea is poor, with him, unless it be ranted about. Hobbes is blamed, because, in dealing with matters of pure intellect, he uses the language which is best adapted to convey them pure into the minds of others. Sir James did not understand a pure

conception of the intellect, nor the use of it; he wanted it always adulterated.

Yet his praise of Hobbes's style is not consistent with this talk. He says, "It seems" (Sir James is seldom sure about any thing) "it seems the very perfection of didactic language." If so, the very perfection of didactic language is to be unmixed with the language of feeling. Sir James's inconsistency, however, is so constantly occurring, that to remark a particular instance of it is of small importance. Sir James says again, "Perhaps" (he is never certain) "no writer of any age or nation, on subjects so abstruse, has manifested an equal power of engraving his thoughts on the minds of his readers." This is a happy expression. The minds therefore of Hobbes's readers, did not lose much, by not being "reminded that he was more than an intellectual machine." Sir James is at prodigious pains to assure his readers, that he is not a mere intellectual machine. He only fails in showing that intellectual can be very safely predicated of his machine.

This is the first part of the account which Sir James gives of the philosophy of Hobbes.

The remaining part is contained in this proposition, That Hobbes's moral system was propounded for the sake of his political.

Sir James announces this in the following manner. "It was with perfect truth observed by my excellent friend, Mr. Stewart" (N. B. what

had we to do with the intrusion of the 'excellent friend?') "that the ethical principles of Hobbes are completely interwoven with his political system. He might have said," continues Sir James, "that the whole of Hobbes's system, moral, religious, and in part philosophical, depended on his political scheme; not indeed logically, as conclusions depend on premises, but (if the word may be excused) *psychologically*, as the formation of one opinion may be influenced by a disposition to adapt it to previously cherished opinions."

What is real in the case is stated by Hobbes himself, in his own simple and true language, in the opening of what he calls the "Explication of the Elements of Law, Natural, and Political." He says, "the true and perspicuous explication of the elements of law, natural, and political, which is my present scope, dependeth upon the knowledge of what is human nature." Going, as he was, to expound the elements of political government, he saw, and he was the first to see clearly, that the elements of political government were the principles of human nature. It was necessary for him, therefore, to begin with the explication of human nature. And he no doubt is at pains to show, when he comes to his political doctrines, that they are correctly deduced from the principles of human nature. But Sir James goes beyond this. He says that Hobbes's moral opinions are twisted into deformity to make them

accord with his political system. This means, that it was necessary for Hobbes to trace to selfish feelings the moral acts of men, in order to recommend his political doctrine; viz. that government should possess unlimited power.

This, in the first place, is naked, and (if the word may be excused, as Sir James would say) foolish, assumption. Sir James knew, or might have known, two things—what Hobbes said of human nature—and what he said of government; but which came first, in the mind of Hobbes, he did not know. The political opinions might have been derived from the moral, as well as the moral from the political. Observe, that this assumption is not prefaced with "perhaps." Sir James is most doubtful, where there is best ground of assurance. His assertion is not only gratuitous, but evidently false. There is no peculiar fitness, in what is called the selfish system of morals, to form the ground-work of the despotic system of government. The sentimental system of morals, which Sir James professes, is far better adapted to that end, and far more frequently worked with a view to its accomplishment.

I perceive that it will not easily be believed, though I am now obliged to aver it, that this is all which Sir James has to give us, as the account of Hobbes's philosophy; for as to the rant with which he terminates the concluding paragraph, about enslaving religion to human tyrants, it is

nothing to the purpose, and is not worth attention.

III. I now come to Sir James's remarks upon Hobbes's moral philosophy.

These should have told us, as well what was good, as what was not good, in this part of Hobbes's speculations. Sir James should have informed us what light Hobbes threw upon the subject of human nature; for true it is, he threw a great deal, though Sir James appears not to have been aware of it. The philosophy of human nature was in a deplorable state, when he first approached it. What he actually expounded, and the openings he made for farther exposition, was a subject of great curiosity, and great importance. Unhappily, Sir James knew nothing, either about the subject, or its importance; and therefore leaves it out altogether, as if he had nothing to do with it. His remarks on Hobbes consist of a string of objections. The reader shall now see what they are.

1. *Hobbes does not distinguish thought from feeling.* This is wholly untrue. Hobbes, in the first chapter of his Treatise of Human Nature, says, "Of the powers of the mind there be two sorts, Cognitive and Motive." Under the first he ranges all that is commonly called *Thought;* under the second all that is called *Feeling.* Of the first sort he treats, in the first six chapters; and of the second sort, in the next four. Is it possible that

the man who says Hobbes confounds the powers cognitive, and motive, of the human mind, can have read these chapters?

Sir James grounds what he says upon a short hint by Hobbes of his opinion as to the physical causes of mental phenomena. Though that opinion is absurd enough, and (according to Hobbes's own judgment, when he declared that it was not necessary to the business now in hand) had better have been omitted, it was yet naturally suggested by the received philosophy of the time, and affords no countenance to the absurd assertion which Sir James founds upon it.

All action, in the time of Hobbes, was considered motion, and all passion, *passio*, the effect produced by action, motion too; since motion can produce nothing but motion. But the two species of motion, the *actio*, and the *passio*, were looked upon as very different things to the sense and conception of the man.

Hobbes, in consonance with this doctrine, says,* "To know the natural cause of sense is not very necessary to the business now in hand. Nevertheless, to fill each part of my present method, I will briefly deliver the same in this place.—The cause of sense is the external body or object, which presseth the organ proper to each sense, either immediately, or mediately; which pressure, by

* Leviathan, part i. ch. i.

the mediation of nerves, and other strings and membranes of the body, continued inwards to the brain, is that which men call sense; and consisteth, as to the eye, in a light, or colour figured; to the ear in a sound, &c.; all which qualities, called sensible, are, in the object that causeth them, but so many several motions of the matter by which it presseth our organs diversely. Neither in us that are pressed, are they any thing else, but divers motions; for motion produceth nothing but motion."

So much for sensation. Now for ideas.* "When a body is once in motion, it moveth (unless something else hinder it) eternally; and whatsoever hindereth it cannot, in an instant, but in time, and by degrees, quite extinguish it. And, as we see in the water, though the wind cease, the waves give not over rolling for a long time after; so also it happeneth in that motion which is made in the internal parts of a man, then when he sees, hears, &c.—for after the object is removed, or the eye shut, we still retain an image of the thing seen, though more obscure than when we see it. And this is it the Latins call Imagination, from the image made in seeing; and apply the same, though improperly, to all the other senses. But the Greeks call it Fancy (phantasia), which signifies appearance, and is as proper to one sense as

* Leviathan, part i. ch. ii.

another." Imagination, Fancy, are, therefore, in Hobbes, names which stand for our modern term, Idea.

Having made this attempt to account physically for sensation, and idea,* he treats afterwards of the train of ideas, which Hume has taught us to call their association; of naming, or the use of signs; and shews wherein memory, understanding, reason, science, consist.

Having thus done with what he calls the powers cognitive of the human mind, he comes in Chapter vi. to what he calls the powers motive; and heads the chapter with these words:—"*Of the interior beginnings of voluntary motions; commonly called the* PASSIONS; *and the speeches by which they are expressed:*" and I shall recount a few of the numerous particulars whereof he gives his explication: Desire, Aversion, Love, Hate, Good, Evil; Pulchrum, Turpe; Pleasure, Offence; Pleasures of sense, Pleasures of the mind; Joy, Grief; Hope, Despair, &c.

How far Hobbes's account of thought and feeling is just and sufficient—is another question, which Sir James ought to have elucidated, and has not; but never surely was an author less liable to censure for having confounded the two, than he who made the distinction between them the foundation of the twofold division of the properties of the

* Leviathan, part i. ch. ii. to vi.

human mind; and treats of them as belonging to two grand heads of inquiry.

When one meets with an assertion like this, in an author who has some reputation, one's thoughts begin to wander; one stares, and asks, where one is? It looks as if one were in a dream.

It is worth remarking, in reference to Sir James's ignorance of what he was talking about, that Hobbes carefully points out a distinction, which he thinks is found between the physical causes of Thought and those of Feeling, or, as he would call them, the cognitive and motive phenomena of the human mind; and accounts for the difference between them. He was obliged by his theory to refer them both to motion. But the motion cognitive was motion in the head, constituting *phantasia*, in the mind. The motion motive was motion carried on from the head to the heart, constituting pleasure or pain. "This motion," he said, "is also a solicitation or provocation either to draw near to the thing that pleaseth, or to retire from the thing that displeaseth; and this solicitation is the endeavour or internal beginning of animal motion, which when the object delighteth is called appetite, when it displeaseth, it is called aversion in respect of the displeasure present, but in respect of the displeasure expected, fear. So that pleasure, love, and

* Human Nature, ch. vii.

appetite, which is also called desire, are divers names for divers considerations of the same thing."

2. Sir James's second objection is delivered in the following words:—"*By this great error*" (viz. confounding thought and feeling, which we have seen that Hobbes clearly distinguished) "*Hobbes was led to represent all the variety of the desires of men, as being only so many instances of objects deliberately and solely pursued.*" As is usual with Sir James's words, they put us on the hunt for a meaning. They, at first sight, look like an enigma. "Hobbes considered each desire of a man as being an object of pursuit." This is Sir James's assertion. But it is not sense. How can a man pursue a desire? Hunger is not an object of pursuit. An object of desire is an object of pursuit, because they are but two names for the same thing.

Sir James gives us his reason for his assertion. The desires of men were represented by Hobbes as objects pursued, "because they" (the desires) "were the means, and at the same time perceived to be so, of directly or indirectly procuring organic gratification to the individual." But this is as far from sense as the former assertion. A desire the means of an organic gratification! The desire of the gratification is the desire; the means of gratifying the desire is not surely the desire itself; though it would not be unlike many of Sir James's conclusions to say so.

By desires, in both members of his sentence, Sir James meant surely, objects of desire; though from his habit of abusing language he did not perceive the absurdity of the expression he used.

Now then we are to see what sense there is in his observation, upon this supposition. "Hobbes did wrong in representing the objects of desire as objects pursued." This however cannot be said; because objects of desire, and objects of pursuit, are but two names for the same thing. Sir James puts in the words "deliberately and solely." Are we then to suppose that his objection lies in the force of these two words? And that Hobbes errs, in considering the objects of desire as objects deliberately and solely pursued.

First of all, we may ask Sir James, if there is any thing deliberately and solely pursued? For if there be, it is by necessity an object of desire. That men do often desire things, not deliberately and not solely, is a matter of fact of which nobody is ignorant, and which most assuredly Hobbes never uttered a syllable tending to deny. We have therefore not yet got at any thing which looks like a meaning.

Sir James goes on—"The human passions are described as if they reasoned accurately, deliberated coolly, and calculated exactly." Did ever any body use language like this before? A passion reasoning! Why Hobbes considered passion, and reason, to be so different one from the other,

that they belonged to two separate heads of inquiry. Hobbes certainly did not consider it impossible, that a man should reason, and be under passion at the same time; or impossible, that he should be carried away by his passion, in spite of his reason.

Sir James goes on again—"It is assumed, that in performing these operations" (namely, the operations of a passion reasoning accurately, of a passion deliberating coolly, and of a passion calculating exactly,) "there is and can be no act of life in which a man does not bring distinctly before his eyes the pleasure which is to accrue to himself from the act." Here, at last, we have a glimpse of what he would be at. After having waded through all this jargon, we come to the assertion, that the error of Hobbes consisted in his endeavouring to trace the motive phenomena of human nature, more frequently called the active principles of human nature, to pain and pleasure. Why, if that was what he meant to say, did he not say so at the beginning? The final cause is plain. Sir James, in that case, would not have appeared profound. To tell us this of Hobbes's philosophy, was to tell us what nobody needed to be told. Whether he did wrong in doing so, is the very question to be resolved. Toward that solution, Sir James did absolutely nothing; but after repeating a parcel of words which have about as much meaning in them as the cawing of

rooks, he decides, upon his own authority, that Hobbes is in the wrong, and he is in the right. Such is Dandy philosophy.

The decision is followed up by another parcel of words, casting abuse upon Hobbes's endeavour, but doing nothing which has a tendency to show the unreasonableness of it. He indeed informs us, that Hobbes would not have done as he did, had he known, what few philosophers, he says, have known, "that our desires seek a great diversity of objects." Indeed! is it so seldom known that a man desires a great many things? also, had he known, "that the attainment of these objects" (the objects of desire) "is indeed followed by or rather called pleasure." Wonderful again! Was Hobbes really ignorant, that the attainment of an object of desire is pleasurable? Sir James proceeds, "but that it could not be so, if the objects had not been previously desired." That is to say, the gratification of a desire would not have been the gratification of a desire, unless the desire had previously existed. Blessed instruction! And blessings on the heads of those, who reared up a reputation for such an instructor! But let the instruction be what it may, how does it show that the active principles of human nature may not be traced up to pain and pleasure? As little does it contribute to that object, to descend, like Sir James, to the lowness of caricaturing a doctrine, which he cannot refute. This he does, by

taking out a few of the decisions of Hobbes with respect to particular cases, stated nakedly, without the analysis which leads to them. The evidence of these decisions lies in the tenor of the whole discourse. To pick them out singly, and hold them up for observation, is a trick to make them be misunderstood. It is also but fair to Hobbes to remember, that, though he was the first to descry the instrument of analysis, he made but little progress in the use of it, and rather divined the results, than traced them. It is no wonder, therefore, if, sometimes, the words in which he couches those results, carry the minds of those, who read them without the context, to a meaning not only not necessary to the general purport of the discourse, but actually at variance with it. Sir James does his endeavour to make this misapprehension general.

3. Sir James's third remark is, that "*Hobbes having struck the affections out of his map of human nature, it is no wonder, that we should not find in it a trace of the moral sentiments.*" We have seen already, that the assertion about striking out the affections is utterly untrue. Every body knows, that the assertion about the moral sentiments is untrue; because every body knows that Hobbes's political system is founded upon the indefeasible obligation of covenants. If there is a moral obligation, there are surely moral sentiments. Hobbes, moreover, very dis-

tinctly explains his opinion of what are called the moral sentiments. Hobbes treats of moral obligations, as being dictates of the "law of nature." And in his second chapter, *De Corpore Politico*, he says, "What it is we call the law of nature is not agreed upon by those that have hitherto written. For the most part, such writers as have occasion to affirm, that anything is against the law of nature, do allege no more than this, that it is against the consent of all nations, or the wisest and most civil nations. But it is not agreed upon, who shall judge which nations are the wisest. Others make that against the law of nature which is contrary to the consent of all mankind; which definition cannot be allowed, because then no man could offend against the law of nature; for the nature of every man is contained under the nature of mankind. But forasmuch as all men are carried away by the violence of their passion; and by evil customs do those things which are commonly said to be against the law of nature; it is not the consent of passions, or consent in some error gotten by custom, that makes the law of nature. Reason is no less of the nature of man, than passion. And is the same in all men; because all men agree in the will to be directed and governed in the way to that which they desire to attain; namely, their own good, which is the work of reason. There can, therefore, be no other law of nature than reason; nor no other precepts of

natural law, than those which declare unto us the ways of peace, where the same may be obtained, and of defence where it may not." Here is a distinct answer to the two questions which Sir James informs us comprehend the whole of moral science; namely, First, what is that we call moral in actions? Secondly, by what principle in human nature, is the distinction between what is moral, and immoral, in actions, made? Hobbes says, it is the useful in actions which constitutes their morality; and it is reason by which the morality is ascertained and appreciated. And yet Sir James has the infatuation to tell us, that there is not a trace of the moral sentiments in the system of Hobbes.

This is more than mere heedlessness, or disregard of what is true or false, in representing the opinions of others. This is to insinuate that Hobbes's system is an immoral system. But this is detraction; which under the perpetual smirk of universal benevolence, Sir James is ever watchful to find room for, when he has to do with any unpopular name; the reverse, in the case of those names which are popular; they seldom escape a daubing of unmerited praise.

The rant which follows, and which is merely the vulgar abuse of that philosophy which traces up moral good to private feeling, without a syllable to shew that it is erroneous, is unworthy of notice.

4. In Sir James's fourth remark he includes two objections. The first is, that Hobbes "*perpetually represents the deliberate regard to personal advantage, as the only possible motive of human action.*" The second is, "*that he does not allow the pleasures of benevolence and morality, themselves, to be a part of that interest which reasonable beings pursue.*"

Both imputations are unfounded.

Sir James must mean, if he means any thing, that to trace up the motive affections of human nature to pain and pleasure, is to make personal advantage the only motive. This is to affirm, that he who analyses any of the complicated phenomena of human nature, and points out the circumstances of their formation, puts an end to them.

Sir James was totally ignorant of this part of human nature. Gratitude remains gratitude, resentment remains resentment, generosity, generosity, in the mind of him who feels them, after analysis, the same as before. The man who can trace them to their elements does not cease to feel them, as much as the man who never thought about the matter. And whatever effects they produce, as motives, in the mind of the man who never thought about the matter, they produce equally, in the minds of those who have analysed them the most minutely.

They are constituent parts of human nature.

How we are actuated, when we feel them, is matter of experience, which every one knows within himself. Their action is what it is, whether they are simple or compound. Does a complex motive cease to be a motive whenever it is discovered to be complex? The analysis of the active principles leaves the nature of them untouched. To be able to assert, that a philosopher, who finds some of the active principles of human nature to be compound and traces them to their origin, does on that account exclude them from human nature, and deny their efficiency as constituent parts of that nature, discovers a total incapacity of *thinking* upon these subjects. When Newton discovered that a white ray of light is not simple but compound, did he for that reason exclude it from the denomination of light, and deny that it produced its effects, with respect to our perception, as if it were of the same nature with the elementary rays of which it is composed?

Sir James's second imputation is a mere repetition of the same absurdity. The compound pleasures of human nature; curiosity, the being an object of esteem and affection, the feeling of esteem and affection, the sense of merit, and others too numerous to mention; are among the most valuable pleasures of human nature. We know them, by our inward experience of them, to be so. Are they less pleasures because they are compound? Does he who shews them to be compound do any

thing to lessen their value; or to prevent their being, as Sir James expresses it, "a most important part of that interest which reasonable beings pursue?" Is there a single syllable in Hobbes which implies that he did not set the same value on them, as all other men? To infer, from his treating them, not as ultimate facts, but capable of being traced to a common source, that he did not allow them to be objects of rational esteem, is to the last degree contemptible.

5. Sir James's last remark, alias objection, is, that *Hobbes had "an utter want of moral sensibility."* This expression alone is enough to settle the character of Sir James. Does it mean, that Hobbes had no discernment, or a less accurate discernment than other men, of right and wrong? Or that he was more indifferent to the distinction? that is, disregarded the difference between moral good and evil, both in his own conduct, and in that of other men? To say either of these things would be gross calumny. But what else can delicacy of moral perception, if that be moral sensibility, apply to?

Sir James informs us, where this want of moral sensibility is to be found. Hobbes "betrays it," he says, "by the coarse and odious form in which he has presented the great principle," that morals are necessary to society. I am altogether unable to conceive what meaning Sir James annexed to these words. I know no-

thing coarse, and odious, in Hobbes's mode of showing that what is good for society is, in truth, morality.

Sir James adds to this, that the perception of the utility of moral acts to society, and that of the connexion between the good of the individual, and the good of the community, are not moral perceptions; or what Sir James calls "essential constituents of our moral feelings." Sir James says that this is "a common error" of moral reasoners, and very pernicious. It would be good in this case to know what feelings Sir James calls "moral." We should then be able to see what the perception of the tendency of a certain class of actions to produce good, both public and private, had to do with those feelings of his. With the moral sentiments, as understood by other men, it certainly has a great deal to do.

Sir James informs us, that it is part of the same pernicious error to suppose that the perception of the tendency of an act to do good is "ordinarily mingled with the most effectual motives to right conduct."

This is an application of the blunder of Sir James about motives, which we have just exposed. He means to say that gratitude, pity, affection, &c., are the most ordinary motives. Who denies it? But does that imply that the tendency of an act to produce good or evil does

not enter into the consideration of the man who acts from gratitude, pity, or affection? If not, the man's act may be a grateful act, a compassionate act, or an affectionate act, but certainly not a moral act; nay, possibly, it may be an act thoroughly immoral; an act for which the law would hang the affectionate performer.

After some more of his stuff about cold, and heat, in moral investigation, and about Hobbes's want of moral sensibility, which, whether he means by it, that Hobbes had an imperfect perception and regard of moral distinctions; or that the social affections in him were weak (absurdly expressed by the term moral insensibility), is an assertion utterly without evidence;* he tells us, that the books which were written against Hobbes "sowed the seed of the ethical writings of Hume, Smith, Price, Kant, and Stewart; in a less degree also those of Tucker and Paley: not to mention Mandeville, the buffoon and sophister

* In the first of the two senses, it would be *against* evidence, and a base calumny. Even in the second sense,—though in Sir James's sentimental philosophy, a heavy charge, it is utterly *without* evidence. What ground has he for pronouncing that in Hobbes the social affections were weak? None whatsoever. Not that we should admit the imputation as a disparagement, if it were proved; as it is a well-known fact that the social affections were weak in some of the best men who ever lived.

of the ale-house; or Helvetius, an ingenious but flimsy writer, the low and loose moralist of the vain, the selfish, and the sensual."

The dragging in of the names of these two writers is characteristic of Sir James. "Apropos of your wife," says somebody in the play, "let us talk of the great Mogul." *Not to mention*, is the connective which introduces Mandeville and Helvetius, along with those, the seeds of whose philosophy had been sown by Cumberland, Cudworth, Butler, &c.; though Mandeville wrote nearly as early as any of those controvertists; and nothing, either in his writings, or those of Helvetius, has the smallest connection with the polemical doings against Hobbes, or can be supposed to have been suggested by them.

At all events, they were two writers of name. It was, therefore, in Sir James's way, to tell us how well he was acquainted with them. They were also two very unpopular names. It was therefore also in Sir James's way to give them a dash of his black brush. He knew with whom it would be popular to speak ill of them. He therefore looked out for disparaging epithets; any would do, so be they were strong enough. So down went "the buffoon and sophister of the ale-house," and "flimsy writer, the low and loose moralist of the vain, the selfish, and the sensual." By these few words Sir James proves that he was unacquainted with the writings which he

thus traduces. No man who was acquainted with them would have chosen such terms to express himself in; however much he might have dissented from what is contained in them. For not only have they no appropriateness to the faults that are in the writings, or have ever been imputed to them; but they do not even point in that direction.

First, for the term sophister applied to Mandeville.

Though a small criticism, it is pertinent with respect to Sir James, to say, that no scholar uses the word sophister. Sophist is the name of the man who uses sophisms. Sophister is the same absurdity as criticker would be. It is a vulgarism, which the good company, kept by Sir James, did not ensure him from.

The word is so inappropriate, that, applied to Mandeville, it is nothing but vague abuse. Sir James might just as well have called him blackguard.

It is not erroneous reasoning, which is called sophistry. No man calls Locke a sophist, even when he differs from him the most widely.

So far is Mandeville from stating his doctrines with artful shading and colourings to captivate the unwary, that he seems to have a pride in rousing men to opposition, by running directly counter to their habitual modes of thinking. No man ever gave his positions more nakedly to the

world. He reasons, from received opinions and the actual experience of mankind, with so much force, as to bestow great plausibility upon the most doubtful of his conclusions: but of that subtle artifice, to which we give the name sophistry, he has none; the appearance of truth which he contrives to throw upon his doctrines is drawn, in fact, from the extent to which he shews that they are supported, by what was generally taught, and by what we actually know of mankind.

"Buffoon of the ale-house," are words exceedingly discreditable to Sir James. The expression denotes a man, whose endeavour it is to raise coarse and immoral laughter among low and profligate people for the encouragement of their debaucheries.

In the first place, there is no mirth in the book. It is the gravest thing for a satire that was ever written. So much for the buffoonery.

Next for the ale-house. Mandeville did not write to the common people at all. It is only an educated man that can enter into the spirit of the work, and derive any pleasure from the perusal of it. Accordingly it never was a book in the hands of the people. I never met with an uninstructed man who was acquainted with it. The author truly describes it, as of the nature of an abstract discourse. But by the term ale-house, added to the sophister and the buffoon,

Sir James conveys an insinuation of a kind, which he is very careful about casting on any name which the right sort of people praise, but very ready to cast, without troubling himself about the grounds of it, on any name which the right sort of people abuse.

The imputation is utterly unfounded, and being the imputation of a crime, is peculiarly base. There is not a book in the English language which is less chargeable with the guilt of administering incentives to the appetites and tastes of the vulgar. Improper gratifications are never spoken of but in a way to make them odious, even when the paradox is maintained, that certain things called public benefits are promoted by them. The object rather is, to degrade the things denominated benefits, than to exalt the things which cause them; from the baseness of which, on the other hand, is inferred the baseness of the things which spring from them.

Not for the sake of Sir James (for of him the exposure is sufficient already), but for the truth of our literary history, the character of the Fable of the Bees needs to be set forth.

It is a satire upon artificial society; and like other satires partakes of the nature of a caricature.

The end is to expose the mummery of the world, and the affectations of those who laid traps for praise by singing eulogiums on the

dignity of human nature; to which end he shews, how much of fair appearance there is which is nothing but pretence; and how much of the fine things, and fine actions, on which we pride ourselves, are the result of qualities in us of which we are ashamed, and which we never cease to decry.

He avails himself of two positions, which were none of his breeding. He found them established in the world, on the authority of religion, and the gravest Divines.

The first is, that all indulgence in things which are not necessary, is sensuality, and therefore vice.

The second is, that there is no virtue without self-denial.

From the first proposition it immediately followed, that we owe every thing in the world we reckon fine and glorious to vice. If men had confined themselves to mere necessaries, there never would have been any arts in the world, nor any science. There would have been no wealth in any country, and consequently no power. Reasoning also correctly from the Political Economy of his time, and not of his time only, but of the greater part of those who think themselves Doctors in the science at the present hour, he said, that if mankind were suddenly to grow virtuous, the earth would be covered with misery, since more than half the species derive

their subsistence from the general vices, and would perish if that source were dried up; that a great population, therefore, accumulated wealth, and splendour, every thing which constitutes the power and glory of a state, being the effect of that multifarious industry which only our vices create, it is easy to see what a noble thing, at bottom, is that magnificence and power of which we are so proud.

And as it is thus seen, from the first of the two propositions, that in the things which are most admired in the world there is nothing but what is, at bottom, mean and condemnable; so, from the two together, it is with equal evidence seen, that there is no such thing as virtue, or very little at least, in mankind. For where is the man, who contents himself with bare necessaries, when he can afford what is more agreeable? Where is the man who denies himself luxuries, up to the extent of his means, unless for the gratification of some appetite, not less degrading?

Where also do you find an action, voluntarily performed, which is hurtful to the actor, and unattended with any compensation? When a man suffers evil in one way, which is made up to him in another, that is not self-denial; it is a sordid calculation of interest; and, upon a close scrutiny, this is found to be all the self-denial which there is in the world. The man calls upon his friends

and neighbours to observe and remember what he gives up. What is delighting him at heart, in the way of equivalent, he keeps to himself, or unwillingly permits to be seen. When a man sacrifices his fortune, or his life, for his country, what does he get in return? Something which he values beyond them: fame. And what is fame? The gratification afforded to the excessive love of praise; one of the meanest of our vices. And such is the foundation of the high and boasted deeds of mankind.

These inferences are supported by a variety of well chosen incidents, and cases, of human life; of ordinary and low life, as often as the application was peculiarly pointed and striking; depicted with great liveliness and force, in language which indeed is almost always homely, but never has any thing to offend the severest virtue, hardly any thing to shock the most fastidious taste.

If I am to speak what I think of his picture of human nature, I say, it is not true. And the two propositions on which it is grounded are not true. But the propositions were part of the theological morality of Mandeville's time, not altogether renounced in our own time; and in the minds of men, taken in the lump, there is such a mixture of what is narrow and low, with what is lofty and comprehensive, that when the meaner ingredients are culled out, and placed in a strong light, the wonder is not much that the senti-

mental talk, which philosophers of the Sir Jamesical cast hold about human nature, should appear deceitful, and to deserve the exposure Mandeville bestowed upon it.

What Sir James says, to please those who delight in hearing Helvetius traduced, is next to be explained. Sir James, as the representative of a class, is an important study.

The "ingenious," and "flimsy," I shall pass. Though by what title Sir James, who does not come up to the flimsy, for that implies some thinking, imputes it to Helvetius, it would puzzle a man of moderate wits to find out.

"The low and loose moralist of the vain, the selfish, and the sensual," deserves more attention; because such an accusation, where not true, stamps a character on the man who makes it.

The character, thereby assigned to Helvetius, makes it a sort of a match for that, just before, assigned to Mandeville. As Mandeville wrote to supply incentives to the vitious desires of the poor and vulgar profligates, Helvetius on the other hand wrote to supply incentives to the desires, equally vitious, because selfish and sensual, of the rich and more refined.

What I am anxious for here, is the word which with the greatest simplicity and force would deny this accusation *in toto*.

I am no extravagant admirer of Helvetius. He is not deep, as a metaphysician; nor close

and strong as a reasoner. But he was a good observer; had reflected much on the operation of moral causes; and has set some important truths connected with them, in a clearer light, than had been done by any preceding philosopher. And so far is it from being the tendency of his writings to lower the standard of morality, that the whole aim of them is to raise it to the utmost; to apportion the esteem of men to the greatness of the object which attracts it; and thereby to call forth the greatest exertions for the attainment of the most valuable things.

The uninstructed and vulgar-minded part of mankind, he says, have mean notions of morality. The class of actions to which their esteem is more particularly directed, is that of the actions, peculiarly valuable with respect to themselves; the narrow views of the individual mark out in such minds the bounds of morality.

But one degree elevated above this is the morality of small societies, or connections of men. In each of these little societies, the actions, habitually praised, and recommended for imitation, are the actions which have in view the interests of the little connection, and most effectually contribute to them. The members of these little connections hear their interests, and the actions which favour them, spoken of, ten times, for once that they hear any other interest, and the actions which favour them,

spoken of, and with ten times the intensity of applause. Imitation, and Custom, are the great masters of the human mind. It is matter of necessity that men, habituated to this narrow circle of ideas, should have poor and inadequate conceptions of morality.

The man, whom his education or other fortunate circumstances have habituated to ideas of the good of one of the larger communities of men, a nation; and to consider the interests of small societies, and of individuals, as subordinate to the interests in which each and all of the other individuals and societies composing the great communities participate; the man, who has learned to fix his esteem upon the actions which promote these great interests, and in whom the motives to the performance of such actions overpower all other motives, is the only man who has reached the elevation of true morality. The other moralities are not only infinitely inferior to this in kind; but, when they are not retained in a perfect state of subordination to it, they are the most efficient causes of the corruption of the moral sentiments of mankind. Little has ever yet been done in the world, to cultivate the enlarged principle of morality; whereas the narrow principles, generated by the feelings of interest, in individuals, and little societies, have never been without constant and powerful incentives. It is obvious, therefore, how the great morality

has, to this hour, had so feeble an influence in the affairs of mankind; the narrow morality an influence so great; and how the happiness of the human race has been kept at so low an ebb.

To call the man, who puts forth these doctrines, with a flood of light, and bends all his endeavour to show, how the high and comprehensive principle of morality may be made to bear that sway in the affairs of men, which the low and narrow principles have hitherto so unhappily usurped, "the low and loose moralist of the vain, the selfish, and the sensual," looks like madness. It is but ignorance, and servility. It is a case of prostitution to the interest of a little confederacy, not reconcileable with that of the whole, whereof it is a part.

A few sentences, hastily picked out of the work De l'Esprit, will show the tone as well as principles, of the morality of Helvetius. The 14th chapter of the second discourse is entitled, "*Des vertus de préjugé, et des vraies vertus.*" The chapter begins, "Je donne le nom des vertus de préjugé à toutes celles dont l'observation exacte ne contribue en rien au bonheur public. Ces fausses vertus sont, dans la plupart des nations, plus honorées que les vraies vertus, et ceux qui les pratiquent en plus grande veneration que les bons citoyens." In contradistinction to these, he gives the name "vraies, à celles qui, sans

cesse, ajoutent à la felicité publique, et sans lesquelles les sociétés ne peuvent subsister."

In the beginning of the 11th chapter of the same Discourse, he says, "Ce n'est plus de la probité par rapport à un particulier ou une petite société, mais de la vraie probité, de la probité considerée par rapport au public, dont il s'agit dans ce chapitre. Cette espece de probité est la seule, qui réellement en mérite, et qui en obtient generalement le nom. Ce n'est qu'en considerant la probité sous ce point de vue, qu'on peut se former des idées nettes de l'honnêteté, et trouver un guide à la vertu."

In the 23rd chapter of the same Discourse, where his object is to unfold the causes which hitherto have retarded the progress of morality, he says, "Pour hâter les progrès d'une science, il ne suffit pas que cette science soit utile au public; il faut que chacun des citoyens, qui composent une nation, trouve quelque avantage à la perfectionner. Or, dans la revolution, qu'ont éprouvé tous les peuples de la terre, l'intérêt public, c'est à dire, celui du plus grand nombre, sur lequel doivent toujours être appuyés les principes d'une bonne morale, ne s'étant pas toujours trouvé conforme à l'interêt du plus puissant, ce dernier, indifférent au progrès des autres sciences, a dû s'opposer efficacement à ceux de la morale."

I shall quote but one other passage. It is in the 23rd chapter of the Third Discourse. "Ce

n'est donc point sur le terrein du luxe, et des richesses, mais sur celui de la pauvreté, que croissent les sublimes vertus ; rien de si rare que de rencontrer des ames élevées dans les empires opulens, les citoyens y contractent trop de besoins. Quiconque les a multipliés a donné à la tyrannie des ôtages de sa bassesse et de sa lâcheté. La vertu qui se contente de peu est la seule qui soit à l'abri de la corruption."

And this is the man whom, in England, a writer, with a philosophical reputation, was found to call the "low and loose moralist of the vain, the selfish, and the sensual!"

SECTION III.

Sir James on Bishop Butler.

SIR JAMES glories in heaping praise on Butler. He takes what Butler has said, as a foundation on which to build. Butler, and Mackintosh, the joint authors of a new and true theory of ethics; to one of whom we owe the foundation, to the other the glorious superstructure: what an item in a future eulogium!

Passing by the flourishes of vague and general praise, let us take the sentence which comes nearest the matter. "In those deep, and sometimes dark dissertations," says Sir James, "which Butler preached at the Chapel of the Rolls, and which contain his ethical discussions, he has taught truths, more capable of being exactly distinguished from the doctrines of his predecessors, more satisfactorily established by him, more comprehensively applied to particulars, more rationally connected with each other, and therefore more worthy of the name of discovery than any with which we are acquainted."

It is curious that, bestowing so many epithets upon the truths of Butler, Sir James abstains

from saying a word about the value of them. If Sir James's epithets were all correctly applied, the truths might still be insignificant. Distinguishable from other men's truths; satisfactorily established; comprehensively applied; rationally connected with each other; all this may be affirmed of very trifling propositions. But Sir James says, that the properties, thus assigned to Butler's truths, entitled them to "the name of discovery." One wonders what idea Sir James annexed to the name discovery. The connexion between "the properties thus assigned," and discovery, in the usual sense of the word, it is not easy to perceive.

Some, however, of these characteristics of Butler's truths, are a little wonderful; their being distinguishable, for example, from the doctrines of his predecessors. We should imagine, that the capability of distinction would depend upon the difference; and that every doctrine, which differed from other doctrines, would be just as distinguishable as those of Butler. He does not tell us what doctrines of Butler's predecesssors he differs from. Butler himself speaks of no difference he had with any body, but Hobbes; and with him, only on one point.

To judge of the pertinence of his other epithets, "satisfactorily established," "comprehensively applied," "rationally connected with each other," we must first know what the truths are, to which they are applied.

They are, according to Sir James's own account of them, in number, two.

The first is, that man does not act from self-love, which is a regard to the sum of his enjoyments; but from his particular appetites and desires, each of which has its peculiar object, which is its end.

The second is, that the faculty of conscience has a right of control over those particular propensities, either to forbid or allow their seeking their own gratification.

The first proposition is "satisfactorily established," as Sir James says—upon what? Upon an abuse of language.

Self-love, or selfishness, says Butler, and his follower, does not mean acting from a man's selfish propensities, but acting with a view to increase the sum of his enjoyments. All men who are acquainted with the English language know, that the word does mean what these two writers say it does not mean. According to them, there is no self-love but that which Dr. Reid is at pains to distinguish from ordinary self-love, by calling it *rational* self-love.—This is not a satisfactory method of proving that self-love is not the spring of man's actions. No man ever said it was in this sense.

Their other instrument of proof is, also, an abuse of language; and a very copious source of error and delusion. They personify an abstract

term; and then ascribe to it, literally, the qualities of an agent. This is in the way of the rhetorical Sir James. It is more surprising that Butler should have been deluded by so poor a fallacy.

Our appetites, say they, have their objects, each its own, at which it aims as its end; our appetite of food, for example; our appetite of drink; the sexual appetite; and so of other propensities. None of these has the augmentation of the sum of our enjoyments as its object.

Is it not miserable, to build a philosophical doctrine upon such a juggle of words? Would not a moderate portion of reflection have sufficed to tell these men, that appetite is merely a name; that nothing really desires, or appetizes, (to make a cognate word); nothing has an object, or an end; nothing aims; but a man. And when a man aims at an object, and that a selfish one, is it not trifling to tell us, that it is his appetite which aims, and not he; therefore he is disinterested?

Observe, this is one of the two truths which Sir James tells us are more worthy of the name of *discovery*, than any with which we are acquainted.

Observe, also, by the bye, that what is here adduced, as deciding the controversy about the selfishness of man, does not touch the matter in dispute. There never was any question, till

Butler came, about that state of mind in which a man seeks his own gratification. The only question was about the state of mind in which he seeks the gratification of others. Does that deserve to be called selfish or social?

We may remark, that Sir James's decision on this point is curious. According to him, it is neither the one nor the other. As a man is neither selfish, nor social, when he has an appetite for food, or any other desire; so, "the desire," says Sir James, "that another person may be gratified, seeks that outward object, according to the general course of human desire;" that is, without making him, to whom the desire belongs, either social or selfish.

The next of Butler's two truths, panegyrized by Sir James, is, that conscience has a controling power over man's other propensities.

There is here the same mystery of personification, as we have had to deal with in regard to the appetites.

What a man's conscience is said to do, the man does. When the man's conscience is said to control, the man controls. But how ridiculous would any person be held who should go about to tell us in lofty phrase that a man has a right to control himself?

If it be replied, that the man *ought* to govern himself in a certain way, we grant it. Nobody denies it, or ever did. But we ask, *why* ought he?

That question has been long asked. And surely it is no answer to tell us, that conscience has a right to direct the way; for that only brings us round to the same point, that the man has a right to direct the way.

This second truth of Butler, the object of Sir James's eulogy, is, therefore, purely nugatory.

And now for a glance at the pertinency of Sir James's epithets.

They are "satisfactorily established." We have seen how they are established.

They are "comprehensively applied." There is no attempt at any application.

They are "rationally connected with each other." There is no connection whatsoever. Man aims at food, and other objects. That is the matter of fact, blundered about in one of the propositions. Man distinguishes right from wrong. That is the matter of fact blundered about in the other. But what connection is there between the two, other than that they are both parts of the same nature?

After the account of what Butler has done; in which Sir James says, there are "no errors;" he proceeds to point out what he calls defects.

Sir James says, that Butler assumes the existence of the moral faculty upon the strength of experience. This he was safe in doing. The matter of fact is undisputed. But Sir James complains that he has done nothing more. He

says, "he has made no attempt to determine" wherein the moral faculty consists. "He does not venture steadily to denote it by a name."

And with regard to the other question, he says, "the most palpable defect of Butler's scheme is, that it affords no answer to the question, what is the distinguishing quality common to all right actions?"

But, if there be only two questions in Ethical Philosophy, viz. what is the moral faculty, and what the moral quality in actions; and if Butler has answered neither; what has he done? And where is the sense of Sir James's panegyrics, upon a man who has done nothing?

The one and only object of Butler, in what Sir James calls "those deep and dark disquisitions," was to prove that man is not in all his actions a self-interested being. To elucidate the theory of morality seems not to have been in his contemplation.

That which he attempted, we have seen that he did nothing towards accomplishing. In proceeding to supply his defects, Sir James does two things. He first enlarges, with a view probably to its better elucidation, on Butler's own point, the disinterestedness of mankind. And, secondly, he gives us, what Butler had not attempted, a theory of the moral sentiments, altogether his own.

First, we shall look at what he says in aid of

Butler; viz., to prove the disinterestedness of human nature.

1. He repeats, in great variety of phrase, that is, a great many times, Butler's own fallacy; that it is not the man, but the man's appetites, which desire, and therefore, that in pursuing the gratification of his appetites he is not selfish.

2. He tell us, that self-love is "a derived principle," and that this was not adverted to by Butler; though it follows from it, he says, that "regard to self is not analogous to a self-evident principle." What he means is, that self-love is not a simple, original, principle of human nature, but a compound, made of elements, which, of course, existed before it. And in this he perceives as little as Butler himself, that he is changing the meaning of the word self-love, and contending for a mere truism, which no man ever disputed.

There is no man who doubts, that his idea of the aggregate of his pleasurable feelings is a complex idea, made up of the ideas of all the pleasures he has experienced. And there is no man, sufficiently acquainted with the principle of association, who knows not, that this idea is a desire; the desire of making additions to this aggregate. But there is also no man who is ignorant, that we have other desires, the simple desires of the elementary pleasures, of which the aggregate is composed. And all men, saving and

excepting Butler and Sir James, have agreed in giving the name selfish to the pursuit of at least a great part of these elementary pleasures.

To give, as proof that man is disinterested, the fact that his desire of augmenting the aggregate of his pleasures is a derived, not an original desire, is an attempt to make proof out of nothing.

Sir James cannot touch upon even the simplest of the mental phenomena, without showing that he cannot express himself about them distinctly.

Among his other phrases, to tell us, that there are elementary pleasures, which precede all states of the mind which have reference to them—a piece of information, which no one needed at his hands—he uses this one;—"No gratification can indeed be imagined without a previous desire." The predication must be reversed, in order to make sense of it. *There can be no desire without a previous gratification.* There can be no desire, without an idea of the pleasure desired. But there can be no idea, without a previous sensation. It is hard to find a man, pretending to knowledge on this subject, to whom these elements are a mystery.

Take another of Sir James's phrases. "No pursuit could be selfish or interested, if there were not satisfactions first gained by appetites, which seek their own outward objects without regard to self; which satisfactions compose the mass which is called a man's interest." Is not this a fine

jargon, by which to tell us, that the springs of action in man are the elementary pleasures of his nature? He says, that no pursuit could be selfish or interested, without these pleasures. Did he not see, that there could be no pursuit at all? To pursue, there must be something to be pursued. And only think of this for a name of these elementary pleasures—"satisfactions first gained by appetites!"

Sir James might have learned from all the philosophers who have treated with any accuracy of this subject, Reid, Stewart, Brown, Mill, that the states of mind called appetites consist of two parts, an uneasy sensation, and a desire; that the uneasy sensation exists prior to experience of the pleasure, the desire, posterior. That this uneasy sensation, like all other uneasy sensations, puts upon tentatives for its relief; and that it affords some direction, not yet distinctly explained, to the object whence the relief is to be derived; is matter of experience. But, to say there can be an idea of a pleasure, before the pleasure has been had, is as absurd as to say, that a blind man can have an idea of colours. "A satisfaction gained by an appetite" is therefore an incongruous expression; and a mark of gross ignorance.

The expression, "appetites which seek their own outward objects without regard to self," is only a further reference to the trash of Butler, about a man's appetite seeking an object,

without his having any thing to do with the matter.

The last part of the sentence has something in it; that "these satisfactions" (meaning the pleasures corresponding to the appetites) "compose the mass which is called a man's interest." In other words, "a man's interest" is the mass of his pleasurable sensations. How does this tally with Sir James's grand proposition, that a man is interested when he seeks to add to this mass, but not interested when he seeks to obtain the several parts of it?

Sir James admits, as a corollary from this doctrine, that there is no more benevolence in a benevolent feeling, than there is self-love, in a selfish feeling; that both sets of feelings are on a par as regards disinterestedness, or selfishness. It is our feelings, not we, who pursue the good, either of ourselves, or others, except on the rare occasions when we are looking at the mass of our own, or the public good. No absurdity with respect to consequences opened, perhaps I had better say reached, the eyes of Sir James.

As self-love, Sir James says, is not less self-love, for being formed of certain elements, so the social affection is not less the social affection, for being formed of certain elements. But what if both are formed of the same sort of elements? What had Sir James to say to that?

Nobody ever denied that we had feelings called

pity, love, generosity, justice, kindness in short; or denied that these complex feelings, in their direct operation, tended to the good of others; the only question is, what these feelings are made up of. Sir James allows that they are made-up feelings; but no where attempts to explain their composition. Now, the analytical inquirers shew, that, directly as in their operation they do tend to the good of others, they are nevertheless made up of feelings which are rooted in self. There was one way, and that an effectual one, of refuting these inquirers; viz., by analysing the social affections, and shewing that they are not made up of the elements, to which Hartley and Mill have traced them. To leave this undone, and only to tell us that self-love is "a secondary formation," and social love is the same, therefore they are different, is to talk without a meaning.

So much, for what Sir James has added to the piece of work, executed by Butler, towards proving the disinterestedness of man.

In regard to the theory of morals, Sir James; having asserted, in swollen phrase, first, that Butler had nearly expounded every thing, secondly, that he had expounded nothing; takes the enterprise into his own hands.

We had better have the whole passage before us.

"The truth seems to be, that the moral sentiments in their mature state, are *a class of feel-*

ings which have no other object but the mental dispositions leading to voluntary action, and the voluntary actions which flow from those dispositions. We are pleased with some dispositions and actions, and displeased with others, in ourselves and our fellows. We desire to cultivate the dispositions, and to perform the actions, which we contemplate with satisfaction. These objects, like all those of human appetite or desire, are sought for their own sakes. The peculiarity of these desires is, that their gratification *requires the use of no means.* Nothing (unless it be a volition) is interposed between the desire and the voluntary act. It is impossible, therefore, that these passions should undergo any change by transfer from the end to the means, as is the case with other practical principles. On the other hand, as soon as they are fixed on their ends, they cannot regard any further object. When another passion prevails over them, the end of the moral faculty is converted into a means of gratification. But volitions and actions are not themselves the end, or last object in view, of any other desire or aversion. Nothing stands between the moral sentiments and their object. They are as it were in contact with the will. It is this sort of mental position, if the expression may be pardoned, that explains, or seems to explain, those characteristic properties which true philosophers ascribe to them. Being the only desires, aversions, senti-

ments, or emotions, which regard dispositions and actions, they *necessarily extend to the whole character and conduct.* Among motives to action, they alone are justly considered as *universal.* They may, and do, stand between any other practical principle and its object; while it is absolutely impossible that any other shall intercept their connection with the will. Be it observed, that though many passions prevail over them, no other can act beyond its own appointed and limited sphere; and that the prevalence itself, leaving the natural order undisturbed in every other part of the mind, is perceived to be a disorder, when seen in another man, and felt to be so in the mind disordered, when the disorder subsides. Conscience may forbid the will to contribute to the gratification of a desire. . No desire ever forbids will to obey conscience."—p. 436.

"The moral sentiments are *a class of feelings which have no other object but the mental dispositions leading to voluntary actions, and the voluntary actions which flow from these dispositions.*" This Sir James sets down as his thesis, and marks for peculiar emphasis, by printing the words in italics.

Is it possible that Sir James conceived he was imparting information by these words?

They give us a mere truism; that the moral sentiments have to do with voluntary acts. Assuredly involuntary acts were never regarded as

the object of the moral sentiments. Nobody ever conceived that there was any thing either moral or immoral in an involuntary act.

Sir James's language implies that he did not know wherein a voluntary act consists. A voluntary act means both the operation of the body, and the state of mind from which it proceeds. Where then was the sense of telling us that the moral sentiments regard both the acts and the disposition, when the acts include both?

And think of the state of mind of the man, who, taking upon him, with an air, to tell us what the moral sentiments are, only tells us what is their object; as if a man going about to tell us what the eye is, should think he had done wonders, by telling us, in misty phrase, it has light for its object. Sir James does not tell us even this object correctly. It is not voluntary acts, but a class of those acts, which are the object of the moral sentiments. And this all the world knew, without the aid of Sir James.

Sir James follows with the exposition of his thesis. "We are pleased with some dispositions and actions, and displeased with others." This is the same thing. This is only telling us that certain actions are the objects of the moral sentiments. Our being pleased with good acts, displeased with bad, is what other people express more properly by saying we approve of the one, disapprove of the other. For, whatever Sir James

might think of the matter, there is more in moral approbation than mere liking, the feeling we have towards a tulip or a dance.

Does there not, also, appear an incoherence between Sir James's former sentence and this? In the former he said, the moral sentiments have for their object voluntary acts. In this he says, they have for their object only "some" of them. Surely Sir James, in his former sentence, did not exclude the liking of good acts, the disliking of bad, from his list of moral sentiments.

Sir James adds, in further exposition, "We desire to cultivate the dispositions and perform the actions, which we contemplate with satisfaction." This is only telling us that we desire to do what we like to do. There is no doubt about that. It is the definition of a voluntary act, that it is an act which the agent is pleased to do. But all acts which are desirable ("contemplated," as Sir James says, "with satisfaction") are not moral acts, nor are the sentiments with which they are regarded, moral sentiments. What information do we receive with respect to the moral sentiments, by being told that there are some voluntary acts which we like, and liking them we desire to do them? We still want to know what is distinctive in the acts we call moral, and what is the nature of the preference we bestow upon them.

Sir James goes on: "These objects, like *all*

those of human appetite or desire, are sought for their own sakes." We have here a curious assertion, that all things are desired for their own sake; while of the innumerable objects of human desire, the undoubted fact is, that the far greater part are desired, not for their own sakes, but wholly on account of something else.

What Sir James is about is sufficiently obvious. He is repeating the stuff of Butler, about an appetite's having an object, a desire's having an object, which is its end. Unless understood figuratively, to speak of a desire's having an object, is simply nonsense. When a man's desire is said to have an object, the real meaning, and the whole meaning is, that the man desires. And when Sir James says, that the desire is limited to its own object, which is its end, the fact is only this, that a man who desires a particular object does desire it, but whether he desires it for its own sake, or for the sake of something else, depends upon the nature of the case.

"These objects," which are "sought for their own sakes," are the acts we like, and the dispositions leading to them, which we like. That is to say, the acts; for the outward act, detached from the mental part, is not an object of liking, or disliking. What Sir James tells us, therefore, is, that an act is sought for its own sake. The ignorance, which could be guilty of such an assertion as this, is not easy to be matched.

It is not less astonishing that a man should be found, who could treat of moral approbation under the head of desire. Why, moral approbation regards the past, an act done; a desire always regards the future; no man desires yesterday, nor anything which it contained.

We pass to another sentence. "The peculiarity of these desires is, that their gratification requires the use of no means." How this can tend to the information which we need, and which Sir James has promised us, namely, what the moral sentiments are, does not appear. We do not ask whether the moral sentiments act by means, or without means; but what they are;—which Sir James seems by no means forward to tell; it suits him better to beat about the bush.

Let us see, however, what he says in the next sentence, which seems intended for an elucidation of the above. "Nothing (unless it be a volition) is interposed between the desire and the voluntary act." Sir James presents to us as an important proposition, that the moral sentiments act without means; and the reason is, that they are in juxta-position with the voluntary act. He says, a few sentences onwards, "the moral sentiments are, as it were, in contact with the will." Telling us, however, what they are in contact with, and that they act without means, is not telling us what they are. It appears to be nothing to the purpose.

It implies, however, incredible confusion of ideas. There are two sets of sentiments, which regard a moral act; those which precede the act, and induce to it, that is, are the cause of it; and those which follow it, and are caused by it. Those which precede the act are volitions, and motives. Those which follow the act are the moral approbation which it excites.

Now it may be said without much impropriety, in a figurative way, that those sentiments which precede the act are in juxta-position with it; because the volition is its immediate antecedent, and the motive is the immediate antecedent of the volition.

But in no rational sense can it be said, that the approbation which follows the act is in juxta-position with it; because this approbation is bestowed upon acts thousands of years after they are performed.

Sir James appears to have jumbled together in his head both sets of sentiments, and to have affirmed of the sentiments which follow the act, and which alone can properly be called the moral sentiments, that which can only be affirmed of those which precede the act, and which are not moral sentiments at all.

When Sir James says, that his two desires, the desire of the antecedent disposition, and that of the consequent act, which two are only one, have no need of means for their gratification, does he

mean, that the sentiments which precede the act have no need of means for their gratification? viz., that an act is immediately preceded by a volition, and a volition by a motive? If this be what he says, it is what all the world says, and of no use to be said here. If he means moral approbation, which is the only other thing he can mean; how does approbation of any sort need means for its gratification? Approbation is the gratification itself; the gratification received from the thing approved.

Sir James goes on; "It is impossible that those passions should undergo any change by transfer from the end to the means, as is the case with other practical principles."

What Sir James calls here, by a gross abuse of language, "passions," are the two desires spoken of above, which we shewed to be only one desire, that of the act, mental and corporeal parts included. But the desire of an act, which except by an abuse of language must respect the future, ought to mean exclusively the sentiments which precede the act; and then nothing is expressed but the well-known matter of fact, that a motive is the immediate cause of a volition, and a volition the immediate cause of an act; which assuredly gives no information as to the moral sentiments.

It is probable, however, that Sir James here abuses the language; and calls the approbation

of an act the desire of it, though the act approved is past, and therefore not an object of desire. What a speech would it be: "I did an act of generosity last night; I desire that act."

Let us however allow him his abuse of language, and come to his ideas. What information did he dream he was conveying to us, with respect to this moral approbation, when he said, that it is not changed by being transferred from the end to the means? The "end," he told us before, was its "gratification." But what is the gratification of moral approbation? Why it is the moral approbation itself. The moral approbation is the gratification which a man derives from a moral act. What, then, Sir James gives us for our edification is, that a gratification is not changed by transference to itself, because there is no such transference.

The case of association, to which Sir James alludes, was not introdnced for the sake of his subject, for it has nothing to do with it. The design must have been, to shew off. But never was a design more abortive; for instead of shewing knowledge of association, the attempt makes manifest the most perfect ignorance of that great principle.

It is true, there are cases in which an association is formed between the idea of an end, and the idea of the means to it, which is indissoluble; and that, frequently, the idea of the means, in such

associations, obscures the idea of the end. This is a case of association familiar to all those who have studied the analysis of mind. But of what use is it to tell us that there cannot be such an association, in the case of moral approbation, and act? Nobody ever supposed there was.

There still remains some of Sir James's language, which importunately calls for a remark. He says that though moral approbation, which he ranks among the passions, does not undergo any change, by transference from the end to the means, other "practical principles" do. It is evident that by principles he here means certain phenomena of the human mind, such as the desires, the appetites, &c., not certain general positions in words, as when we say, the principles of geometry, the principles of political economy, &c.

Sir James then applies the word "practical," which is only applicable to principles in the second sense, to principles in the first sense, where it is incongruous. Who ever talked of a practical appetite, a practical affection? As if there were any speculative appetites, speculative affections. Sir James did not know the difference between "practical" and *active*.

Sir James's language is also very inaccurate, when he says that things are changed by transference from the end to the means. There is no change. When money, the means of commanding pleasures, the most familiar instance of the associa-

tion I have above adverted to, becomes a more constant object of desire, than any of the pleasures which it can command; the desire of every thing, gross, or refined, is precisely the same desire which it was before. What has happened is, that a complex desire has been generated, which acts more forcibly than its elements one by one.

What Sir James says next, it is more difficult to comprehend, than any thing he has given us yet. "When another passion prevails over them, the end of the moral faculty is converted into a means of gratification."

Sir James had been talking of the desires which are in contact with the will, and which need the use of no means. It would therefore seem that his predication is of the sentiments which precede the act. The meaning of the words in that case would be, that when the motive to a moral act is overcome by another motive, the end of the moral faculty is converted into a means of gratification. The nonsense of this appears to be self-evident. When a man acts immorally, he is gratified, it says, with the morality of a moral act.

If we consider the predication as made of the sentiments which follow the act, called moral approbation and disapprobation, the discrepancy of the ideas is not less. When moral approbation is prevented, namely, by the incurring of moral disapprobation, then the end of moral approbation, viz. the good which has not been

done, is converted into a means of gratification. When evil is incurred, and good missed, the evil-doer is gratified with the good he has prevented.

When Sir James's moral faculty (to use his own and Butler's phraseology) is defeated, and misses its end, that is, its gratification, its gratification (when thus missed) is converted into a means of gratification. Is it possible, that Sir James could mean to say this? If not, what could possess him, to use such language?

"But volitions and actions are not themselves the end, or last object in view, of any other desire, or aversion."

What is this, other than to say, that the desire or aversion of volitions and actions is the desire or aversion of volitions and actions? Every other object of desire is in the same situation. It is the object of its own desire, and not the object of any other. A man has a desire for a fine coat. The fine coat is the object of that desire, and not the object of any other desire.

"Nothing stands between the moral sentiments and their object. They are as it were in contact with the will."

Here again, it is doubtful whether Sir James, by the term "moral sentiments," means the sentiments which precede, or those which follow, the moral act.

If he means the sentiments which precede, what he says is, that the motive to a moral act is

a motive to the will. And certainly this is true of all motives.

If he means the sentiments which follow the act, in other words moral approbation, what he says is, that moral approbation is the approbation of that mental state which gave birth to the act; which is all that by possibility can be meant by that most extraordinary saying, that moral approbation is in contact with the will, or that nothing stands between it and its object. And it is undoubtedly true that moral approbation peculiarly embraces the mental state.

This, however, is only telling us, once more, what moral approbation is the approbation of. It is, he repeats, the approbation of voluntary acts.

Having thus examined the propositions of Sir James, piece-meal, let us look at them in conjunction.

1.

Some voluntary acts we like.

2.

Liking them, we desire to perform them.

3.

We desire them for their own sakes.

4.

The desires of voluntary acts are in contact with the will.

5.

This mental position explains the supremacy of conscience

The first two sentences present to us this position, that the *moral* sentiments are desires of acts. What acts? Such acts as we like. Moral acts, therefore, are such acts as any man likes. And a man acts morally, when he follows his inclination.

When Sir James said, that we have a desire to perform certain acts, did he not know, that this is true of all acts. We perform no acts, without a desire to perform them; one sort of desire to one set of acts, another to another.

Did Sir James also not know, that the desire, in consequence of which we perform an act, is the motive to it?

Sir James in these propositions therefore confounds moral acts with all other acts; and he confounds the moral approbation of an act with the motive of it.

Sir James having made discovery of this desire of acts, tells us some wonderful things about it.

'It is the desire of its own object, in which it rests, looking to nothing beyond.' But this is no distinction. This is true of all desires. Every desire, if this be the mark of its morality, is a moral desire.

Again, what is that desire, in consequence of which we perform an act? It is not the desire of the act; but of some consequence of the act.

This desire, says Sir James, is in contact with

the will. If he means, that a motive is the immediate antecedent of a volition; this is true of all volitions, not those alone which are the antecedents of moral acts.

The result of all is, that moral acts are produced by motives; and therefore conscience is supreme.*

Sir James is very clamourous about this supremacy; and takes upon him to work the proof of it in a new, and, it must be confessed, a very surprising manner.

Butler had said, that the moral faculty, which he takes as synonymous with conscience, has a natural supremacy over the other active principles of our nature, a right to regulate, and command. Butler, however, gave no account of this right. He did not explain why it is that we recognize such a right. Sir James supplies that omission. The moral sentiments have this supremacy, he says, because they are in contact with the will.

He might just as well have assigned any thing else whatsoever; any thing that came in his head. He might have said the moral sentiments are not

* The exposition here given is an abridgment of what I had originally written on this portion of Sir James's lucubration. The more minute developement, though rejected as tedious, may have its use to some of those who are anxious about the knowledge of these things. It is therefore inserted in the Appendix.

in contact with the will—therefore they have the supremacy. Between his contact and his supremacy, there is precisely no connection at all.

Sir James's words are, "It is this sort of mental position" (the *contact*) "that explains, or seems to explain those characteristic properties" (supremacy) "which some philosophers ascribe to them." Sir James goes on: "Being the only desires" (viz. the desire of having a disposition, and the desire of performing an act) "they, being the only desires, aversions, sentiments, or emotions" (it seems that his two desires have plenty of names) "which regard dispositions, and actions, they necessarily extend to the whole character and conduct. Among motives to action, they alone are justly considered as *universal*."

The feelings which precede the act in the breast of the performer are here again confounded with the approbation which succeeds in the breast either of the performer or other men. Sir James transfers the name moral sentiments, or conscience, to the motives which incite the performer to the act; and because one set of feelings are in contact, as he expresses it, with the will, *i. e.* are motives; another set of feelings, he says, are endowed with supremacy. An excellent title!

But, if the point were ever so well made out, that conscience has this supremacy, what does it contribute to the exposition which Sir James

promised us, of the *nature* of this supreme faculty? Butler proved the supremacy, to the satisfaction of Sir James; and yet Sir James tells us that Butler left the exposition of the moral faculty unperformed. What was not exposition of that faculty in Butler cannot well be its exposition in Sir James.

Sir James's wording still deserves a notice.

He says, that the desire to cultivate moral dispositions, and the desire to perform moral acts, are the only feelings in the breast of man, " which regard dispositions and actions."

Moral dispositions are not all a man's dispositions. He has dispositions which are immoral, and dispositions which are neither the one nor the other. One man has a disposition to frugality, another not; one man a disposition to horse-racing, another not; and so on.

How came these dispositions to be generated? By desire assuredly; otherwise they are involuntary; and the man is not responsible for them.

As to desire of acts, it is too obvious to need mentioning that no act is performed without a desire. According to Sir James's doctrine, no act is performed without a moral desire.

Sir James's assertion, that the desire to cultivate moral dispositions, and the desire to perform moral acts, are the only feelings in the mind of man which regard dispositions and actions, is so

ludicrously at variance with what every body knows, that one's difficulty is to conceive the state of mind in which a man must have been to put forth such a proposition. The only rational solution is, that a man who talks for the sake of talking, gets a habit of running on with words, connected with which he has not an idea in his mind.

What here, therefore, Sir James delivers, as the solution of the question, why the moral faculty has an authority over the active principles, is, in the first place, not true; and in the next place, if it were true, would afford no solution at all. The cause of their supremacy he says is their universality. But universality is no ground of supremacy: every thing universal is not entitled to command.

Besides, this talk about one propensity being a subservient, another a commanding propensity, is merely that figurative jargon, the absurdity of which we have already seen.

When we say that a propensity does so and so, we mean that a man does so and so, from this or that motive. When we say that one propensity controls another, we only mean that a man thinks it better to act in one way than in another.

In explaining the supremacy of the moral faculty, by the pretence of universality, it is vain to tell us, that the man always prefers acting morally, for that is not the fact; or to tell us, that

he feels he *ought* always to prefer it; for, granting the fact, and it is not to be granted absolutely, it is only affirming the mental phenomenon, not explaining it. The question, the solution of which Sir James tells us he is after all this while, namely, *why* a man judges, that he ought, is untouched.

Sir James affirms, that there is an universal feeling of obligation to do what is right, abstain from what is wrong. But what does that prove? Nothing at all, but its own existence. It is a phenomenon of human nature. Is it an ultimate fact? or is it a complex phenomenon, resolvable into more simple elements?

Sir James says, "Among motives to action, the moral sentiments alone are justly considered as *universal*." What Sir James here calls the moral sentiments, if they are, as he says, motives, and the universal motives, are the sentiments which precede the acts; and yet they are the same two desires, the desire of volitions, and the desire of acts, which we have been obliged to consider as moral approbation and disapprobation. Moral approbation, therefore, and the object of it, in the language of Sir James, are the same thing.

And these two, moral approbation, and the object of it, he says are universal motives. A man capable of penning sentences like these is surely no ordinary phenomenon.*

* "What a wretched abuse of words is this; and what

"This result of the peculiar relation of conscience to the will, justifies those metaphorical expressions which ascribe to it authority, and the right of universal command."

The peculiar relation which Sir James speaks of, is what he had called before, "contiguity as it were." What he means by the *result* of that contiguity, is more obscure. The natural construction implies that it is the power of forbidding, or commanding, ascribed to it in the two preceding sentences. But if so, observe what the assertions amount to. The right of command belongs to conscience, from its relation to the will. This right of command justifies the expressions which ascribe to it that right. Why, what else should justify any expression ascribing a quality to any thing, but the fact of its belonging to the thing? Were a writer to say, the faculty of vision in man justifies the use of expressions ascribing to him that faculty; what would be thought of him? But is the talk of Sir James better nonsense?

Sir James goes on with what seems intended for an illustration of the above important remark. "The conscience is immutable." I believe this is the first time that such an attribute, since the word was first invented, was ever ascribed to it. Does it mean that conscience is always con-

gross shifting; in order to appear to give a solution of what they do not understand."—Horne Tooke, Diversions of Purley, ii. 450.

science? In that sense it is only on a par with all other things. A hand is always a hand.

Does it mean that conscience is always right? If so, what is meant by the terms, an ill-informed conscience, a misguided conscience? Sir James explains. "The conscience is immutable," he says; "for, by the law which regulates all feelings, it must rest on action, which is its object, and beyond which it cannot look."

The immutability, then, consists in this—that conscience has an object, and it always looks to that object. But is this peculiar to conscience? Is not the appetite of food, the appetite of food? avarice the appetite of wealth? ambition the appetite of power? If conscience "rests on action," (a funny expression), does not hunger, "by the law which regulates all feelings," rest on food, avarice on wealth, and so on; and are they not, if that be immutability, all as immutable as conscience? And if this immutability constitutes the right of command, have they not all that right? But, independently of this, why should immutability give a right of command? Between immutability and right of command, there seems to be no connection whatsoever.

With respect to this right of command, which Sir James is so anxious to make out, a word is necessary.

Sir James so little understands the import of words, as to be ignorant that the very term con-

science, moral faculty, involves the idea of command. It is this faculty which declares what is right and what is wrong. But to declare what ought to be done, what ought not to be done, the same as declaring what is right and what is wrong, is the very essence of command; it is the moral command, very distinct from the physical, sanctioned by extrinsic punishments or rewards.

We have no occasion, therefore, to look out for any ground of command; it is involved in the idea of right and wrong. Right is what ought to be done; wrong what ought not to be done. The true account, therefore, of the idea of right and wrong, is the only account of the command, implied in the declaration of right and wrong.

Sir James, more foolish than Butler, who assumed the right of command, without seeking to account for it, seems to have thought he would greatly improve upon Butler, if he shewed upon what grounds it rested.

He has already given us *universality*, and *immutability*, as two of his grounds; and we have seen what they are good for. He comes now to another, *independence*. What he means by independence is this; that our actions being all in our own power, we cannot be hindered from performing a moral act, whenever we please. He puts this matter of fact into strange lingo. But assuredly this matter of fact has nothing to do with right of command.

We must, however, have Sir James's words. If his ideas are always worthless, it is not an ordinary lesson which may be extracted from his use of words.

"As the objects of all other desires are outward, the satisfaction of them may be frustrated by outward causes. The moral sentiments may always be gratified, because voluntary actions, and moral dispositions, spring from within. No external circumstance affects them. Hence their *independence*. As the moral sentiment needs no means, and the desire is instantaneously followed by the volition, it seems to be either that which first suggests the relation between *command* and *obedience*, or, at least, that which affords the simplest instance of it."

There is not one of the more complicated phenomena of the human mind of which Sir James has more in his brain than a confused shadow of an idea. He is therefore constantly mistaking one thing for another.

He says, "Voluntary actions and moral dispositions spring from within, hence the moral sentiments may always be gratified." He did not see that immoral dispositions spring also from within; and that voluntary actions include all actions. According to this shewing, immoral sentiments have as much right to command as moral sentiments.

Sir James says, "As the moral sentiment needs

no means," [*add*, nor the immoral either], "and the desire is instantaneously followed by the volition," [*add*, in the case of the immoral sentiment, as well as the moral], "it seems to be either that which," &c. Sir James's *its*, and *theys*, &c., are very much like those of the Bishop of Worcester, of which Locke so frequently complained. The bishop, he said, exercised a despotism over those words, which no man of inferior consequence could venture upon. It was often a matter of doubtful inference, whether they related to the words which stood in order of syntax with them, or to something else, which was to be gathered from the context. Thus Sir James's *it*, has standing before it, "the moral sentiment," "the desire," which is another name for the same thing—and "the volition." Which of these is the antecedent? or is any of them the antecedent? He says this, "*It* is either that which first suggests the relation between command and obedience, or," &c. First of all, what does he mean by the first suggestion of the relation between command and obedience? Is it that from which the idea, or knowledge of the relation, is first derived? In that sense the moral sentiment, or desire, cannot be the antecedent; for even Sir James will hardly venture to say, that it is from the moral desire, our idea of the relation between command and obedience, is first derived. As little will volition answer the pur-

pose. Volition does not give us the first ideas of command and obedience.

Sir James, perhaps, means to say, that the relation between desire and volition, which he says is that of immediate sequence, suggests the relation of command and obedience, which is not an immediate sequence.

Did Sir James imagine, that we have no idea of command and obedience, till we have an idea of the relation between the desire and the will? The number of people is small, who ever make that distinction at all: and no wonder; for who but Sir James ever yet spoke of the desire of a will? "I desire to lift my arm," is an expression exactly equivalent to "I will to lift my arm." Sir James would therefore say, "I desire to desire to lift," &c. But what is "I desire to desire," but a very bad mode of saying "I desire?"

Sir James says the relation of the desire to the will, "is at least that which affords the simplest instance of it." Sir James refuses to express any thing correctly. The relation of the desire to the will *is* an instance of command and obedience, if it has any thing to do with that phenomenon. It does not *afford* an instance; that is, produce something else which is an instance.

Sir James then considers the desire a command, the will an obedience. One abstraction commands another. Is not this instructive discourse? Could Sir James never understand, that

it is the man only that acts? Those acts of his which get abstract names for convenience, his desires, his volitions, &c., are not things that act, they are the man's acts. But to say that a man's act acts, that his stroke strikes, is the sort of talk which all men call nonsense.

Sir James says, the desire of a volition is the command of a volition, making command synonymous with desire. He would therefore say, if he were to quit his personifications, and try to state simply the matter of fact, "I command myself to will." But what can we make of the expression, "a man commands himself to will?" It either means, that he wills himself to will, or it means nothing. But is not this again another specimen of that sort of discourse which men call nonsense?

But even if Sir James's desire and volition were an instance of command and obedience, which it is such nonsense to call them, what connection has that with the right to command, which Sir James ascribes to a particular class of desires above all others? What Sir James assigns for a reason is in general nothing at all,—words, as here, without any meaning. And if what he assigns were a reality, it would not in the least account for that of which he gives it as the account.

If a man can command himself to will, does his moral command derive any authority from

that? If commanding himself to will gives a right, he commands himself to will, as much in the case of immoral commands, as the moral ones.

We have now examined Sir James's grounds why we do, and approve doing, that which we deem right; abstain from doing, and approve abstaining from doing, that which we deem wrong, the account of which necessarily lies, in our so deeming,—in that and nothing else,—instead of which, Sir James tells us, that we so act, and so abstain, so approve, and so disapprove, because the desire of cultivating a disposition leading to voluntary acts, and the desire of performing the acts which follow from these dispositions, are universal, immutable, and independent. The nonsense which he has delivered under these heads, is certainly not to be surpassed.

The whole of what follows, to the end of the paragraph, is mere flourish, a declamatory repetition of what Sir James thinks he has proved; and which we have shewn that he has not proved; having made obvious that he has done nothing but trifle solemnly with the subject, advancing either trite observations, or truisms, or identical propositions, or propositions totally, and often ludicrously false. Nevertheless, it will be useful to quote the passage, interspersing such remarks, as Sir James's forms of expression may seem to demand.

"It is therefore with the most rigorous precision that authority and universality are ascribed to them." After what has been said, this requires no remark. "Their only unfortunate property is their too frequent weakness; but it is apparent that it is from that circumstance alone, that their failure arises." In a contest of strength it could arise from no other. "Thus considered, the language of Butler concerning conscience, that had it strength as it has right it would govern the world, which may seem to be only an effusion of general feeling, proves to be a just statement of the nature and action of the highest of human faculties."

There is no more certain test of an understanding which has no force in it, than the facility with which it is taken in by a truism. Butler says,—that if the moral faculty were strong enough, we should all act morally; this is the same thing as telling us, that if we all did act morally, we all should act morally. And this is one great half of the wonderful discoveries ascribed to Butler by Sir James. When the matter of fact, obscured by ridiculous language, about a conscience having authority, is expressed naturally, there is no difficulty to any body. The *man* decides. Conscience is but a word. The man decides that certain things are right, other things are wrong. What authority does he want for doing what is right; abstaining from what is

wrong? In the very deciding, that an act is right, he decides that it ought to be done. Is not this all that is meant by the command of conscience? The very point decided is the obligation. The talk about the right of command assigned to conscience is but so much jargon. It literally means, that what is judged right to be done, is judged right to be done; which, to be sure, is a conclusion of the class for which Sir James has a predilection.

Sir James goes on; "The union of universality, immutability, and independence, with direct action on the will, which distinguishes the moral sense from every other part of our practical nature,* renders it scarcely metaphorical language to ascribe to it unbounded sovereignty and awful authority over the whole of the world within." The predication here is mere repetition of what Sir James has been making out so laboriously, and to so little purpose, that the moral faculty has a right to command. It is a repetition, however, of that unmeaning proposition, in very inflated language, some parts of which

* *Practical nature,* what is that? A practical man is a man conversant with practice. Is a practical nature, a nature conversant with practice? Sir James in another place talked of practical principles; which by the usage of the language should mean, principles conversant with practice. Sir James misapplied the word. He mistook the difference between it and action. He does the same thing here. And what is more, mistakes "our nature" for part of our nature.

had better be noticed. Observe, first, that Sir James here changes the term moral faculty into moral sense. Sir James knew that the term moral sense is the designation of a particular theory, which is wholly inconsistent with Sir James's. According to Sir James, the moral sentiments, which have the right of command, are desires; but how he would make desires into a sense, I pretend not to guess. Sir James says, that the union of universality, immutability, and independence (we have seen what they are) give these desires "unbounded sovereignty." Why, or how? Sir James shews not. Sovereignty is one thing; universality, immutability, independence, are different things. Sir James affirms they confer sovereignty; and that is all. We have his words for it. That is Sir James's best mode of proving.

Sir James goes on with his union; it "shews," he says, "that attributes, well denoted by terms significant of command and control, are in fact inseparable from it." The attributes he means are his universality, immutability, and independence. The "union" of them, he says, "shews" something. But what can the union of them "shew," which they do not "shew" separately? He says the names of them "are significant of command and control." Did Sir James ever think at all, when he was putting down the words of this treatise? Was there any intercourse

between his mind and his fingers? Whoever before imagined that the words universality, independence, immutability, involved any idea of command? Besides this, the union of them, he says, "shews" something else. It "shews that they are inseparable from it" (the moral sense). How does the union come to shew any such thing? The union only means that they agree in being attributes. That three attributes agree in being attributes proves, he says, that they are inseparable attributes. Can it be believed that a man wrote this seriously? What follows is better still. That three attributes agree in being attributes of some one thing, proves, he says, that the three constitute the very essence of the thing. Colour, and size, and shape, are three attributes of a man's eye; the union of these three proves that they are the very essence of the eye.

Sir James has not yet done with his "union:"— "It justifies those ancient moralists who represent it as alone securing, if not forming the moral liberty of man." First of all, what is it Sir James means by the "moral liberty of man?" Does he mean what is called the liberty of the will? Let us see whether that meaning will answer his purpose. Did any philosopher, either ancient, or modern, ever say that the moral sense "secured," or "formed," the liberty of the will? It has assuredly no connection with the will

different in kind from that which any other of our active principles possesses.

There is only one other meaning which I am able to invent for what he calls the "moral liberty of man." The Stoics boasted, that a man's actions were in his own power, and that he never could be compelled to do an immoral act without his own consent. But what use is there for Sir James's "union," to confirm an opinion which nobody ever disputed; and which means only that a man cannot be compelled to perform a voluntary act, without his consent. Which is as much as to say, an act cannot be voluntary, if it is at the same time involuntary. Or a voluntary act is always a voluntary act.

Sir James, still going on with his long sentence about the "union," finishes thus: "And finally, when religion rises from its roots in virtuous feeling, it clothes conscience with the sublime character of representing the divine purity and majesty in the human soul."

Sir James's (*its*) in this sentence, is another instance of the privilege Sir James uses in common with Locke's bishop. In the former sentences, wherein it appears, it always applies either to his "union," or to his "moral sense." In this case neither of these antecedents will do. The only antecedent that comports with any meaning is "religion." What

he says, then, is, that "religion rises from its own roots." It certainly cannot rise from any other roots. Next he says, that "its roots are in virtuous feeling." This expression is ambiguous; "the roots of religion in virtuous feeling," may mean, either that the virtuous feeling is the root or roots of religion; or it may mean, that the virtuous feeling is not the root, but the soil in which the root is fixed. Sir James says, that religion rises from virtuous feeling, which is its root, or the soil in which its root is fixed. And what does it do when it "rises?" It "clothes." And what does it "clothe?" Conscience. And what does it clothe conscience with? A "sublime character." And what is the "sublime character?" A power of "representing" the divine attributes in the human soul.

Now to pass by the jargon about the "root," which has nothing to do with the present subject, and also the metaphorical flourishing, let us ask what he means when he says religion imparts to conscience a power of representing the divine attributes in the human soul? Does it mean the more accurate ideas, which we derive from revelation, of the divine perfections? Or does it mean, the sanction which morality derives from the idea of the divine approval? These are all the ways in which religion touches the moral faculty. But what a jargon, in which to express this solemn but simple truth? And upon which

of the points, which Sir James was called upon to make out, has it any bearing whatsoever?

Sir James, having thus expounded the moral sentiments; given us, as he afterwards calls it, his ethical theory,—appends an observation.

"Be it observed," he says, "that though many passions prevail over them, no other can act beyond its own appointed and limited sphere; and that the prevalence itself, leaving the natural order undisturbed in any other part of the mind, is perceived to be a disorder, when seen in another man, and felt to be so by the mind disordered, when the disorder subsides."

Sir James says that the moral *passions* (he here ranks the moral sentiments among the passions, according to his usual accuracy of speech) can alone act beyond their own appropriate and limited sphere.

What he means to say is, that the desire of food never acts against the desire of drink, nor the desire of drink against that of food, and so on; but the desire of a moral act opposes all other desires, whenever they are wrong. Here, again, Sir James wholly misapprehends the phenomena. It is not true of any one of those desires, that it does not oppose another desire, in the very sense in which the moral desire opposes it. The moral desire does not oppose the desire of food; a man may desire food or drink as long as he pleases. The moral desire (pardon the

absurdity of the term) only desires a moral act; in doing which it antagonizes with every desire of an immoral act, and, when it is stronger, prevails. In this sense, the desire of food is opposed, and that successfully, by the desire of drink, as often as a man prefers the pleasure of intoxication, to the pleasure of eating. In fact, it is the case, whenever of two antagonist and synchronous desires one prevails.

Sir James says, that the prevalence itself, that is, the man's acting, in obedience to some impulse of his nature, with a violation of morality, leaves the natural order undisturbed in any other part of the mind.

Sir James's inaccuracy in the use of words, is a phenomenon. He says, that something is in *any* part of the mind, when he means *every*. Suppose I should say this house is very disagreeable; there is a bad smell in any part of it;—what would be thought of my knowledge of the English language?

But now to come to Sir James's undisturbed order. Let the case be a violation of chastity. Sir James says, this is a disturbance of the natural order in some part of the mind; while the natural order remains undisturbed in "any" other part.

One or two questions here. A violation of chastity disturbs the natural order in one part of the mind. What part? Or into how many

parts does Sir James divide the mind? Or is this only a metaphorical division, while, in reality, there is no division at all? What, then, is the meaning? That the sexual impulse, instead of being subordinate to the moral dictate, becomes superior to it? But why is this a violation of the natural order? Is it not according to nature to obey the strongest impulse? Sir James says, the sexual impulse *ought not*, and the moral *ought* to have been obeyed. This is merely bringing us once more to the same point. It is giving us the phenomenon for its own explanation. The phenomenon of moral obligation is a fact in human nature. Sir James undertakes to explain this fact; and after leading us through a labyrinth of words, he ends in this, that the phenomenon is the phenomenon, and farther the exponent saith not.

If Sir James means, by the natural order he here speaks of, obedience to the moral impulse over all other impulses (and I can assign no other rational meaning to his words), his telling us that the violation of this order in a case of sexual indulgence leaves the natural order undisturbed in "any" other part of the mind, can only mean that obedience to the sexual appetite in preference to the moral dictate of the mind, does not imply obedience to the appetite of food, or any other impulse, in disobedience of the moral dictate. But surely this is a matter of common experience,

of which no man needed to be informed by Sir James. Oh, what a misfortune to have acquired the habit of venting trite, or identical propositions, in perplexed and mysterious language, before audiences easily and willingly deceived!

This obedience to the sexual, disobedience to the moral impulse, Sir James says, is perceived to be a disorder, when seen in another man. By disorder he means disobedience to the moral dictates. Is it then any thing extraordinary, that a violation of morality should by those who see it be known to be a violation of morality? or considered to be so, by the man himself, when the temptation is over?

It is for the benefit of exemplifying strongly to the young, the tendency of vague and circuitous language, in philosophy, that there is any use in attending to Sir James. For that reason, we notice the two sentences which he gives us next. "Conscience may forbid the will to contribute to the gratification of a desire. No desire ever forbids will to obey conscience." All this personification of certain mental phenomena; one phenomenon forbidding another phenomenon; one phenomenon contributing to the gratification of another phenomenon; a certain phenomenon never forbidding a certain phenomenon to obey a third phenomenon; is, in itself, rank nonsense. And when you apply to it the only rational meaning of which it is susceptible, it is a trite, or rather

nugatory observation; neither more nor less that this, that it is sometimes immoral to obey a desire; but it is never immoral to obey conscience in opposition to a desire; which seems to come to this, that it is moral to act morally, immoral to act immorally. And this is the sum and substance of Sir James's "theory."

At the same time, and after all this laborious trifling, the subject itself is simple.

There are, as we have had frequent occasion to observe, two sets of feelings (using feeling generically as the name of any state of mind) concerned about moral acts. The first set of feelings are those which precede the act in the mind of the actor, and are the cause of it. The second set are those which follow the act, and are caused by it.

About the first set of feelings, there never has been any difficulty. They have been always well understood. They are the motives to the acts, and the dispositions or affections from which the motives proceed. There never was a question about them but one, whether they were original or derived; that is, whether they were ultimate facts, or had their origin in the personal feelings of the individual.

The second set are comprehended in the terms moral approbation and disapprobation. With respect to the existence of these feelings, there is as little room for controversy. Every man has

the consciousness of them; knows what causes them, and what the effects which it is their tendency to produce. But there has been great controversy about what they are, and various opinions have been put forth and maintained concerning them.

Sir James undertook to tell us what they are; and, after a tedious round of talk, has ended by telling us—what we are not the wiser for.

The greater part of what he has said relates to the first set of feelings, those which precede the act, about which we had no need of his talk; for every body understands them; and the only inquiry which concerns them, viz. what is their composition, he has left untouched. He has told us, that they are desires; that, as such, they have objects; that these objects are their objects; that they are in contact with the will. This, however, is only a strange way of stating the matter of fact, which all men know, that moral acts, like other acts, are produced by volitions, and volitions by desires.

The remarkable thing is Sir James's transition to the sentiments which follow the act, and are produced by it. He says, that the sentiments which precede the act are also the sentiments which follow the act; and that they are so by being in contact with the will.

And this is Sir James's account of moral approbation and disapprobation.

SECTION IV.

Sir James on Bentham.

SIR JAMES has made the most perfect exhibition of himself, in the article on Mr. Bentham.

He begins, as most due, with a panegyric on himself. He has had the courage to speak honestly of former philosophers. He is willing to put his courage and honesty to the severest test, in speaking of Mr. Bentham. And he appeals to "the very few who are at once enlightened, and unbiassed," whether "his firmness and equity have stood this trial."

The reader may ask, naturally enough, what call there was for this loud profession of virtue on the present occasion? As Sir James was not going to praise, but to help in disparaging, an unpopular writer, he had nothing to fear. His "courage," and "firmness," at all events, whatever was the case with his "honesty," had no severe trial to undergo, in taking the very course which led most directly to his end.

Sir James's mode of expressing himself gives us here, as elsewhere, something to do. "Perhaps," he says, (Sir James is seldom sure,) "the utter hopelessness of any expedient for satisfying

his (Bentham's) followers, or softening his opponents—" Who called upon Sir James for any such "expedient?" His business was to appreciate accurately the merits, and demerits of the writer, without consulting the pleasure, either of those who liked, or of those who disliked him. "The utter hopelessness of any such expedient may," he says, "perhaps enable a writer to look steadily and solely at what he believes to be the dictates of truth and justice." If Sir James needed helps, to enable him to regard exclusively what "he believed to be the dictates of truth and justice," in representing the characters of other writers, he was very unfit for the task he had undertaken. What species of man is it, who can speak other than what "he believes to be the dictates of truth and justice?" Sir James says, it was the utter hopelessness of pleasing any body, at least any of those who took a part, one way or other, regarding Bentham, which elevated him to that height of virtue. Could he have pleased any body by an "expedient"—truth and justice, he seems to think, might have fared indifferently.

In the short discourses, which Sir James gives us on a list of names, one after another, (the sort of things which make articles in a magazine, and which he calls, when hung together like beads on a string, the history of philosophy), the first part is generally something in the way of biography. This rule he observes in the article on Bentham.

When any one takes on him to state matters of fact, material to the reputation of individuals, even those of former times, much more those who are alive, (Mr. Bentham was alive when the notable dissertation appeared), he is bound to the utmost vigilance, in ascertaining the truth, even to minuteness, of every thing which he states. The accusation against Sir James, on this score, is very serious.

The degree of ignorance which he displays respecting the habits of Mr. Bentham, considering the opportunities of knowledge which he had, is amazing. His statements, confidently given, are, with hardly any exception, such departures from the truth as deserve the name of misrepresentations; and, as they are on the unfavourable side, of unfounded imputations. This does not entitle us to impute wilful, and malignant mendacity to Sir James. But it proves him to have been a man who, in speaking of others, to serve a purpose, little minded whether he was speaking correctly or incorrectly.

He begins his talk about Mr. Bentham, with some unknown persons whom he calls his disciples. He frames a picture in his imagination, as remote from the truth as can well be imagined, at the same time very unfavourable to the parties concerned in it, and vouches for this to the public, as a statement of matters of fact.

What motive Sir James had for such a pro-

ceeding as this, is a question which will not fail to be asked by those who are coming upon the stage; and to which the recollection of the principal divisions of political opinion, and pretension, in this country, a few years previous to the time when Sir James began to pen the Dissertation, supplies the answer.

"The disciples of Mr. Bentham derive their opinions not so much from the cold perusal of his writings, as from familiar converse with a master, from whose lips," &c.

This is mere fiction. It may be safely affirmed, that no man ever derived his opinions from the lips of Mr. Bentham. It is well known, to all who are acquainted with the habits of that great man, that conversation with him was relaxation purely. It was when he had his pen in his hand, that his mind was ever raised to the tone of disquisition; and he hated at any other time to be called upon for the labour of thinking. Except in the way of allusion, or the mention of some casual circumstance, the doctrines he taught were rarely, if ever, the subject of conversation in his presence.

It is also a matter of fact, that till within a very few years of the death of Mr. Bentham, the men, of any pretension to letters, who shared his intimacy, and saw enough of him to have the opportunity of learning much from his lips, were, in number, two. These men were familiar with the

writings of Mr. Bentham; one of them, at least, before he was acquainted with his person. And they were neither of them men, who took any body for a master, though they were drawn to Mr. Bentham by the sympathy of common opinions, and by the respect due to a man who had done more than any body else to illustrate and recommend doctrines, which they deemed of first-rate importance to the happiness of mankind.

This is the whole foundation, in matter of fact, which Sir James had for making the statement to the world, with unhesitating assurance (none of the "perhapses" here, without which, on other occasions, he hardly ventures to affirm, that two and two make four), that Mr. Bentham's habit, and practice was, to hold forth in a conventicle of fools, or knaves, or both, such as elsewhere was not to be found on the face of the earth.

During a few years previously to Mr. Bentham's death, when his reputation throughout Europe made the pleasure of seeing him generally sought, he was led by degrees to open his doors to a greater number of visitors; the larger proportion of them, however, strangers, mostly indeed foreigners, who saw him a few times, and then closed their intercourse. Such men, as he consented to see, he received at dinner, and only one at a time. For it was one of his rules, seldom infringed, that his working hours in the morning were not to be interrupted for any body; and

another, that conversation was never good for any thing with more than one person at a time. The men whom, even during this short and last period of his life he saw with any frequency, or who professed peculiar esteem for his doctrines, were but two or three at most.

Sir James has more to say about his conventicle. "He and they," (the grand quack, and the little ones), "as they desire the credit of braving vulgar prejudices, so must be content to incur the imputation of falling into the neighbouring vices, of seeking distinction by singularity; of clinging to opinions because they are obnoxious; of wantonly wounding the most respectable feelings of mankind; of regarding an immense display of method and nomenclature as a sure token of a corresponding increase of knowledge; and of considering themselves as a chosen few, whom an initiation into the most secret mysteries of philosophy entitles to look down with pity, if not contempt, on the profane multitude."

This is not a short catalogue of imputations, all opprobrious (they are called "vices" by Sir James himself), and all unfounded.

Sir James, first, pays the men an equivocal compliment. They brave vulgar prejudices. This is good, or not good, as the case may be. It is sometimes an act of virtue, to yield to prejudices. Further, it is hardly ever any thing but a vice, to brave them. The people are not to be

insulted for their errors; but weaned from them; even when the time is most fully come for acting on principles better than theirs.

Mr. Bentham never braved prejudices. He reasoned with those who were mistaken. But he braved sinister interests, however powerful; and gave them no quarter, wherever he found them at mischievous work. And extraordinary, even at this early day, are the effects which may be traced to his manly and unsparing disclosures; thoroughly, I am ready to confess, out of the line of Sir James's exertions, and calculated to excite in him, and in those who patronized him, no ordinary resentment.

The imputation, standing first in order, is—that Mr. Bentham, and the tribe who listened to him, "sought distinction by singularity." To seek reputation by fraudulent means, is the characteristic property of the mountebank; and a most despicable course of life, whether a man follows it by affecting *similarities*, or singularities; only it is to be remembered, that the line of the similarities is the most common, and by far the most gainful.

The only question of importance is, what evidence Sir James had of this criminal conduct? To men, known only as writers, the singularities which can with any pertinence be imputed, are their singularities as writers. And singularities in a man's writings can only be of two sorts;

singularities in the matter; or singularities in the manner. In the matter, every author whose aim is to add to the stock of knowledge, makes it his utmost endeavour to obtain singularities; and the more successful he is, the greater the honour to which he is entitled. Every new idea, nay every improvement in the mode of expounding important ideas, is a singularity; but at the same time a benefit, which mankind have always treated, not as a vice, which the talk of Sir James would make it, but as a merit, entitled to the highest applause.

If the *matter* of a book of philosophy be good, the *manner* is a thing of very inferior consequence. Besides, a manner may be very singular, without being very bad. Sir James might have known, if he had known any thing, that there never yet was a truly original thinker, who had not peculiarities of manner. What more singular, than the manner of Aristotle, or the manner of Plato? Yet who ever thought of bringing manner as a charge against them? Bacon is singular in manner, and Locke, and Montesquieu. Who more singular than Milton, even in poetry, where manner is of more importance? And with what matchless effect?

There are singularities, no doubt, in Mr. Bentham's mode of writing. His anxiety to give his ideas with the utmost possible precision, induced him to do two things, for which he has met with

no mercy at the hands of the small critics; first, to make his sentences complex, with qualifying clauses; and secondly, to employ a new word, of his own making, when he did not find an old one suited to his purpose. But this does not hinder the writings of Mr. Bentham from abounding in beauties of expression, both exquisite and original. To the charge of affectation, or the desire of producing effect by manner instead of matter, the writings themselves give the most direct contradiction. And of the men whom Sir James may be supposed to have included in the set who went to learn quacking at the abode of Mr. Bentham, to not one have the singularities of this writer, or any other singularities in the mode of writing, been ever imputed. When Sir James, therefore, laid the charge against them, that they pursued reputation by unworthy means, he had not even a shadow of evidence for what he affirmed.

The next imputation is of a still more serious nature. Bentham, and his brood, were men, Sir James informs us, who "clung to opinions because they were obnoxious." By clinging to an opinion, must be understood, I suppose, adhering to it strongly. But the men who can adhere strongly to an opinion, for any thing, but the truth of it, are not only not philosophers, but not honest men; and, instead of approbation and honour, deserve nothing but the contempt and hatred of the world. The evidence, again, is

the point of importance. If such a charge is advanced without evidence, the man who is the author of it is not good for much.

An obnoxious opinion means an offensive opinion; that is, offensive to somebody. But that proves nothing against the opinion. So long as there are classes of men, who have interests adverse to the rest of the community, the most important opinions will be the most offensive to those, too frequently the most powerful, classes of the community. There is great virtue in putting forth opinions of that sort, and also, as Sir James expresses it, in clinging to them. But Sir James acts not the part of a friend to that kind of virtue, when he endeavours to throw upon it the obloquy of proceeding from a hateful motive, that of giving offence to other men. What ground had Sir James for imputing to Mr. Bentham, or any of those whom he meant to class along with him, this criminal course of conduct? Nay, the case is still worse. For against what power of evidence, that these men were distinguished in a peculiar manner by care to shew the foundation of their opinions, and to value opinions for nothing but the truth and importance of them, had he the impudence to assert that they adhered to them, because they were mischievous?

Sir James's malignity is still more glaringly displayed, in the next passage, where he says, Mr. Bentham, and those whom he classes with

him, "incurred the vice of wounding the most respectable feelings of mankind." The feelings, which men most respect in others, are the feelings by which they are most strongly tied to the discharge of their duties. To put forth opinions which wound those feelings, must be to put forth opinions which outrage the principles of morality. Was Sir James so lost to all sense, not of morality, but of shame, as to impute this to Mr. Bentham, and those who hold opinions analogous to his? If not, what did he mean? And what shade of guilt was it his honourable purpose to insinuate? If there is any man alive who is bold enough to defend Sir James, let him shew a single opinion of Mr. Bentham, which tends to wound any feeling, that deserves to be respected, in any human being. Mr. Bentham's opinions grew from one root; viz., that the good of mankind is the obligatory principle. He employed his whole life in applying that principle to the great branches of human interests; to laws, to the construction of governments, to ecclesiastical establishments, to education, and to morality. In all these great departments he found, that the interests of the many had been habitually sacrificed to the interests of the few. In other words, vice, instead of virtue, had been the dominant power in the management of human affairs. To tear the veil from this mystery of iniquity, and to shew the many how they had been

treated, as was done with no sparing hand by Mr. Bentham, was sure to wound the feelings, whether respectable or not we have yet to inquire, of those knots of the few, who grasped in their hands the several branches of the national interests, political, legal, and ecclesiastical; and who viewed with rage the man who demonstrated the importance of protecting against them the interests of the greater number. These feelings Mr. Bentham wounded, and none other. He, and they who thought with him, regarded such feelings as interested attachments to things injurious to mankind, and, agreeably to their principles, decided that the good of mankind was the preferable object. Sir James was one of those who take part with the knots, and desire to discredit those who stand up for mankind.

Sir James's next imputation, too, is false, but frivolous. He says that these wounders of the feelings which attach the few to the plunder of the many, "regarded an immense display of method and nomenclature as a sure proof of a corresponding increase of knowledge." In the first place, they did not make any such display; and in the next place, if they had shewn more than usual care of method and nomenclature, it would not have followed, that they regarded it as a sure proof of a corresponding increase of knowledge. This is only abuse, as destitute of sense as of foundation.

Sir James goes on. They, the same persons who took method and nomenclature for knowledge, "considered themselves as a chosen few, whom an initiation into the most secret mysteries of philosophy, entitled to look down with pity, if not contempt, on the profane multitude." Sir James was a blunderer, in cunning, as well as philosophy. He knew there was nothing mankind were more sure to repay with usury, than contempt. He, therefore, thought, that he could do nothing more effectual to prevent them from esteeming either Mr. Bentham, or those who held similar opinions, than by representing them as crazy with self-conceit. Here, as usual, Sir James disregarded evidence; but he talked too much, and his talk betrays him. He says, that this board of quacks were puffed up, by considering themselves initiated into the most secret mysteries of philosophy. Sir James forgot, that the times we live in are two thousand years from the times when there were philosophers with secret mysteries, to which they admitted a chosen few. Mr. Bentham, at all events, printed and published all that he considered valuable in his thoughts; and all the world knew, or might have known, as much about them as any of those who enjoyed his acquaintance. Sir James, therefore, was unguarded in telling us, that the heads of Mr. Bentham and his friends were turned by secret mysteries. Every thing in Mr. Bentham's

writings is the very reverse of mysterious. He applies plain principles to things the existence of which is not denied; and desires mankind to look and see what is good for them, and what is not. So far from trying to persuade the world that there is great difficulty in understanding what he teaches, Mr. Bentham is perpetually expressing his astonishment that men should have been so long unable to see their own interest. No; the quality in Mr. Bentham, which Sir James would willingly degrade, by confounding it with self-conceit, was an attribute of a very different order; that high moral courage, with which he announced opinions, when he knew them to be well founded, and of importance to mankind; however they might be hated by those to whose interests they were opposed. A man like Sir James can hardly have an idea of this state of mind. The firmness of belief, grounded on evidence; and the ardour of enunciation, inspired by the love of mankind, shew nothing to him but a man foolishly admiring himself, and underrating the rest of his species.

The mode of viewing the operation of the sinister interests by Mr. Bentham, and Sir James, constituted a radical distinction between the men. To Mr. Bentham it appeared to the last degree odious; Sir James was very indulgent, if not partial to it. Mr. Bentham always spoke of it in the language of indignation and scorn. This, in the eyes of Sir James, was highly reprehensible.

"To the unpopularity," he says, "of his philosophical and political doctrines," meaning the dislike of them by those of the sinister interest, whom he attacked, "he has added the more general and lasting obloquy which arises from an unseemly treatment of doctrines and principles which, if there were no other motives for reverential deference, even a regard to the feelings of the best men requires to be approached with decorum and respect." The "doctrines and principles," here spoken of, are the pleas made use of to support the sinister interest, in its inroads upon the good of mankind; for no other doctrines or principles did Mr. Bentham ever mention with that strong reprobation, which Sir James here calls "unseemly treatment." The pleas and pretexts, which the interested set up, to encourage and defend themselves in perpetrating mischief to the rest of mankind, ought, says Sir James, to be treated "with reverential deference;" shewing well in what school he had learned his morality. And even, continues Sir James, if there were not other motives for this sort of devotional respect to the sinister interest, "a regard to the feelings of the best men requires that" its mischievous pleas and pretexts "should be approached with decorum and respect." Mr. Bentham's views were drawn from other sources. The pleas and pretexts, by which mischief was done to mankind, it was right, in his opinion, to teach the world to know

and detest, whoever the men might be, whose feelings were to be hurt by the endeavour. They could not, in his opinion, be the "best men," they could not be good men, whose feelings were engaged in favour of those who lived as the enemies of their species.

So much for what Sir James's historical researches have enabled him to charge upon Mr. Bentham, and those whom it pleases him to treat as his accomplices.

We now proceed to Sir James's account of the doctrines of Mr. Bentham.

He begins with jurisprudence; that is, the great field of Mr. Bentham's labours. What he did elsewhere was either auxiliary to those labours, or something which grew out of them. I am tempted to give the passage at length.

"The great merit of this work, and of his other writings in relation to *Jurisprudence* properly so called, is not within our present scope. To the Roman jurists belongs the praise of having allotted a separate portion of their Digest to the signification of the words of most frequent use in law and legal discussion. Bentham not only first perceived and taught the great value of an introductory section, composed of definitions of general terms, as subservient to brevity and precision in every part of a code, but he also discovered the unspeakable importance of natural arrangement in jurisprudence, by ren-

dering the mere place of a proposed law in such an arrangement a short and easy test of the fitness of the proposal. But here he does not distinguish between the value of arrangement as scaffolding, and the inferior convenience of its being the very frame-work of the structure. Mr. Bentham, indeed, is much more remarkable for laying down desirable rules for the determination of rights, and the punishment of wrongs, in general, than for weighing the various circumstances which require them to be modified in different countries and times in order to render them either more useful, more easily introduced, more generally respected, or more certainly executed. The art of legislation consists in thus applying the principles of jurisprudence to the situation, wants, interests, feelings, opinions, and habits, of each distinct community at any given time. It bears the same relation to jurisprudence which the mechanical arts bear to pure Mathematics. Many of these considerations serve to shew, that the sudden establishment of new codes can seldom be practicable or effectual for their purpose; and that reformation, though founded on the principles of jurisprudence, ought to be not only adapted to the peculiar interests of a people, but engrafted on their previous usages, and brought into harmony with those national dispositions on which the execution of laws depends. The Romans under Justinian, adopted at least the

true principle, if they did not apply it with sufficient freedom and boldness. They considered the multitude of occasional laws, and the still greater mass of usages, opinions, and determinations, as the materials of legislation, not precluding, but demanding a systematic arrangement of the whole by the supreme authority. Had the arrangement been more scientific, had there been a bolder examination and a more free reform of many particular branches, a model would have been offered for liberal imitation by modern lawgivers. It cannot be denied, without injustice and ingratitude, that Mr. Bentham has done more than any other writer to rouse the spirit of juridical reformation, which is now gradually examining every part of law, and, when further progress is facilitated by digesting the present laws, will doubtless proceed to the improvement of all. Greater praise it is given to few to earn. It ought to satisfy Mr. Bentham, for the disappointment of hopes which were not reasonable, that Russia should receive a code from him, or that North America could be brought to renounce the variety of her laws and institutions, on the single authority of a foreign philosopher, whose opinions had not worked their way either into legislation or into general reception in his own country. It ought also to dispose his followers to do fuller justice to the Romillys and Broughams, without whose pru-

dence and energy, as well as reason and eloquence, the best plans of reformation must have continued a dead letter,—for whose sake it might have been fit to reconsider the obloquy heaped on their profession, and to shew more general indulgence to all those whose chief offence seems to consist in their doubts whether sudden changes, almost always imposed by violence on a community, be the surest road to lasting improvement."

Sir James ascribes to Mr. Bentham two "discoveries;" First, the usefulness of definitions of general terms; Secondly, the usefulness of a good arrangement. Assuredly, Mr. Bentham did not claim the merit of a discoverer, in regard to either of these two very useful things. It will be said, perhaps, that Sir James only meant the discovery of their usefulness, in jurisprudence. But it was no very great discovery, to find out that what was useful in every other department of thought, would be useful also in this. If he meant, that it was never seen before, not even by the crowds of persons, who, from generation to generation, had been manufacturing wealth and power to themselves, out of their knowledge, or pretended knowledge of the subject, a curious state of intellectual capacity is imputed to them.

On one point, the words of Sir James deserve looking at. Mr. Bentham "discovered the unspeakable importance of natural arrangement in jurisprudence." Very well. And then Sir James tells

us what he did it by. He did it, "by rendering the mere place of a proposed law in such an arrangement a short and easy test of the fitness of the proposal." The process is curious. Mr. Bentham, first of all, made the good arrangement, for he could not make a place in it till he had it. He had it, however, without yet knowing whether it was good for any thing or not. To arrive at that knowledge, it was necessary to put a proposed law in it, in its proper place; to make that place the test of the goodness or badness of the law; and when the law was so tested, Mr. Bentham saw, and not before, that a good arrangement was a good thing. Sir James does not tell us, in what way, the chapter and section, in which such or such a law would be inserted in a well-made code, would shew its goodness or badness, and no man that lives, or ever will live, will do it for him.

Mr. Bentham's knowledge of a good arrangement, after he had made it, and after he had discovered (which was a subsequent operation) the unspeakable importance of it, was still very imperfect. "He did not distinguish between the value of arrangement as scaffolding, and the inferior convenience of its being the very frame-work of the structure." A man accustomed to hear words used with ideas annexed to them, is confounded, when he listens to such a volley as this. What notion of arrangement could Sir James

have had in his head, when he called it scaffolding? The scaffolding is something extraneous to the building. The arrangement is the putting every part of the materials, every brick, every beam, every plank, every nail, in its proper place. The arrangement, however, in Sir James's notion, is not the scaffolding merely; it is both the scaffolding, and the frame-work of the building. Is not this sufficiently marvellous? And Mr. Bentham is blamed for not knowing that its utility as frame-work is less considerable than its utility as scaffolding. I dare be sworn that Mr. Bentham never contemplated it in either light.

So much for Mr. Bentham's merits, and demerits, in the work of arrangement. Sir James next proceeds to the beaten topic of theory and practice; and tells us, of Mr. Bentham, what the blockheads are so fond of saying, of the men who think; that he was theoretical, rather than practical. Sir James thus delivers himself of the usual prattle. "Mr. Bentham, indeed, is much more remarkable for laying down desirable rules for the determination of rights, and the punishment of wrongs in general, than for weighing the various circumstances which require them to be modified in different countries and times, in order to render them either more useful; more easily introduced, more generally respected, or more certainly executed." These few lines display, what poor, inadequate, ideas were in the head of Sir James,

upon the subject of jurisprudence. He says, that Mr. Bentham, being a theoretical jurist, was most strong in laying down rules for the determination of rights, and the punishment of crimes in general. He did not see that this is not the business of jurisprudence at all. Sir James was ignorant of the import of the words he used. There are no rules in general; all rules are rules in particular; they are directions for the performance of acts one by one. The arithmetical rule of three, though it applies equally to an infinite number of cases, applies to them individually.

Sir James confounds jurisprudence and legislation. The business of jurisprudence, is exposition; the business of legislation, is prospective command. The jurist investigates the true ends of law; and explains the system of operations or means, by which these objects may be the most perfectly obtained. These are the great subjects on which the powers of Mr. Bentham's mind were habitually employed; not in making rules in general for the determination of rights; rules in general for the punishment of wrongs. Such combinations of words are mere jargon.

This is Sir James's account of what Mr. Bentham could do: next follows his account of what he could not do. He could not weigh the circumstances to which laws are to be accommodated. Question.—How did Sir James know? Answer.—He did not know. Question.—How, then,

came he to say so? Answer.—By the bad habit of asserting what made for the present purpose, whether he knew it to be so or not.

Had Sir James any instance he could shew of a law proposed by Mr. Bentham for any of Sir James's "different countries and times," and which was at variance with any of "the various circumstances which require laws to be modified in order to make them either more useful, more easily introduced, more generally respected, or more certainly executed?" He had not. But he had before him another thing, of which it did not suit him to take any notice; evidence that Mr. Bentham considered attention to the circumstances which distinguish any people for whom a particular code is designed, as essential, and of primary importance.

There are two sets of circumstances, to which it is necessary to attend in the making of laws. There are circumstances, which all nations have in common. There are other circumstances, which each nation has peculiar to itself. The first set of circumstances, those which nations have in common; at least, nations which are nearly on the same level in point of civilization; are beyond comparison the most important; and were laws well adapted to them, the modifications required for the particular circumstances of each particular country, would not be very great. But here is the curious thing, in the theory of those

who prate like Sir James. The men, they say, who alone are capable of attending to the general circumstances; the more numerous, and the more important; of understanding them, and making provision for them, are utterly incapable of understanding and making provision for the peculiar, far less numerous and less important, circumstances, which are found in particular communities. Why should they? Has it ever been shewn, that there are any of those circumstances which cannot be made known to these men, when they have occasion to know them? that there is any of them, the import of which they cannot comprehend? or for which, when so comprehended, they are unable to perceive the provision which should be made? The very reverse of all this is the truth. The only men who can appreciate the circumstances which are accidental to this or that particular people, are the men who best understand that far more important part of the circumstances constituting their condition, which they have in common with the men of other communities. The operation of the minor circumstances can only be judged of by knowing the bearing upon them of the fundamental, and the predominant. But how can that be known to them to whom the circumstances themselves are unknown, to whom they have never been objects of study, hardly of a casual regard? Accordingly, we see what work is made by the

men called practical, when they have to construct laws for another country than their own. They utterly neglect both sets of circumstances, both those which the country in question has in common with other countries, and those which are peculiar to itself. They transplant bodily the laws of their own country, as if this were the best provision which could be made for a country, the circumstances of which may differ in any degree.

Sir James then goes on to inform us, wherein the "art of legislation consists." It consists in applying principles to circumstances. It applies the principles of jurisprudence to the circumstances of a people. This is stale talk, which gives no information, and proves the utmost poverty of ideas. What does Sir James take the principles of jurisprudence to be? Does he suppose, that they are a parcel of theorems, embodying abstract truth? Such as the theorem, that things equal to the same thing are equal to one another? One would imagine that this is what he does suppose, by what he says about the resemblance of the principles of jurisprudence to pure mathematics. But if this be what he understands by the principles of jurisprudence, jurisprudence has no such principles; and his definition of the art of legislation, therefore, is, that it applies nothing to something; viz. to the circumstances of a people.

The business of jurisprudence is not to lay down theorems; but to trace, and expound, the means adapted to a certain end. That end, to denote it the most generally, is the protection of rights. Jurisprudence, then, investigates the means which are best for the protection of rights. It does not determine what ought to be rights, and what ought not; or what is that distribution of powers, which is most conducive to the happiness of mankind upon the whole. That belongs to the science of legislation, wholly distinct from that of jurisprudence; though Sir James, in his plenitude of knowledge, appears to have confounded the two.

Nations have not been uniform in the constitution of rights. Rights have been constituted in some countries, which have not been constituted in others. It is, however, remarkable to what an extent uniformity prevails. There is wonderful similarity, in all that is most important in rights, between what is constituted in one country and another, even under great differences in point of civilization, and other circumstances.

Rights, jurisprudence takes as it finds them; and then inquires by what means they can best be secured. By its investigations it has established, that for this security it is necessary, first, that rights should be accurately defined; secondly, that such acts as would impair or destroy them, should be prevented by punishment; thirdly, that

men should be appointed to determine all questions relating to rights, and the violation of them; fourthly, that the trust vested in each, and the mode of exercising it, should be according to certain principles, and fixed by rules. Definition of rights, punishment for wrongs, constitution of tribunals, mode of procedure in the tribunals, are the heads under which all the objects of jurisprudence are arranged. What does Sir James mean by applying these to circumstances? The definition of rights is the definition of rights, under all circumstances; the punishing of crime, or the creation of artificial motives to abstain from certain acts, is of the same nature, under all circumstances; the deciding of differences by third parties, is equally necessary under all circumstances; and the best mode of proceeding, in order to get at the truth in the disputed case, is the same under all circumstances. What, in truth, is all this, but a skilful use of circumstances to the attainment of a great end; an end common to all nations, by use, mostly, of the circumstances common to all nations; modified, to be sure, where need is, by the circumstances peculiar to each. The phrase, principles of jurisprudence, then, in any correct sense of the word, means the skilful adaptation of circumstances to a particular end. But what can Sir James mean by telling us, that the art of legislation consists in applying the use of circumstances to circumstances?

Sir James favours us with another choice remark on the subject of jurisprudence. His words are, "Many of these considerations," the instructive ones we have been just examining, "serve to shew that the sudden establishment of new codes can seldom be practicable or effectual for their purpose; and that reformations, though founded on the principles of jurisprudence, ought to be not only adapted to the peculiar interests of a people, but engrafted on their previous usages, and brought into harmony with those national dispositions on which the execution of laws depends."—This is the slang of those who are the enemies of all reform. This serves for a while, after the language of direct adherence to what is contrary to reason can no longer be held. Your reform is a good reform, a code is a good thing; but the "sudden establishment" of it is bad; therefore wait a while; and as the argument is equally good at all succeeding times, it is an argument for everlasting postponement.

What meaning had Sir James, when he talked of "new codes?" A code is the expression, in written characters, of the rights, existing in some country, for the purpose of making them certainly and easily known. If a book, containing that expression, were once made; and that, though difficult, is not impracticable; where is there any impracticability whatsoever in the use of it? The use of it would be to render every thing easier.

Sir James had a jumble in his head of an alteration of rights, along with a definition of rights. There are much more serious objections to an alteration of rights, than are contained in Sir James's words "impracticable," and "ineffectual for their purpose." But these are no concern of those who do not propose by their codes to make any alteration of rights.

Sir James says, that his foregoing considerations tell us another thing; that the reforms intended for a people, should not only be good for the people, but seen by them to be so; for if, in consequence of previous habits, they should believe them to be injurious, they will impede their operation. "These considerations serve to shew," he says, "that reformations, though founded on the principles of jurisprudence, ought to be not only adapted to the peculiar interests of a people, but engrafted on their previous usages, and brought into harmony with those national dispositions on which the execution of laws depends."

"Peculiar interests of a people." Did Sir James know any interests of a people which are not peculiar? And if he did, was it his opinion that reformations did not need to be adapted to that portion of a people's interests?

As it may always be alledged that a people's "usages" and "dispositions" are adverse to the reforms which any body has his reasons for disliking, this is a standing argument against all

reform; though it is easily seen to be utterly worthless for that purpose; because if any man says, that such or such a measure is good for the people, but the people do not see that it is good for them, there is only one honest course open to him, and that is, immediately to set about instructing them. If any thing is really good for the people, it is rarely indeed a very difficult matter to make them see that it is so. The only difficulty is with that class of persons who see, that whether good or not for the people, it will not be good for them; who therefore do all they can to misguide the people; and as long as they have power and influence are never without such folks as Sir James to aid and abet them.

The mistakes of the people, regarding their own interest, may commonly be rectified, where much influence and artifice are not employed to delude them. What is wanted, therefore, is, to unmask the influence, and detect the artifice. Because Mr. Bentham did this, with the perseverance and power, which all acknowledge, he brought upon himself the obloquy which we have found Sir James so eager to repeat, and to confirm, by all the weight of his authority;—which, however, by the time we have done with him, will not, I imagine, go for much.

Besides, the observation is extraneous to the present purpose; for what is there, in the law reforms which jurisprudence recommends, that

can be ill-adapted to the "previous usages," and "national dispositions," of any people? No people can be unwilling that their rights, which are rights only so far as known, should be accurately made known. No man who needs redress of wrongs can be sorry to see a fit person appointed, near his door, to afford him that redress. No man who desires decision according to the truth can be unwilling that such a course of inquiry should be prescribed, as leads to it with most certainty, and least expense. No man who desires security against wrong decision, but must be pleased to have the power of calling, at little or no expense, for a review of the decision of which he complains, by another and a higher tribunal. What then could be Sir James's motive for prating to us about the necessity of adapting these operations "to the peculiar interests of a people; engrafting them on their previous usages; and bringing them into harmony with those national dispositions on which the execution of laws depends?"

The last thing Sir James tells us of Mr. Bentham's labours in jurisprudence is, that he "roused the spirit of juridical reformation." Sir James says that this deserves great praise. And I shall tell how it was done. It was, by laying bare to public view the deformities of the existing system; and covering with shame the artifices by which sinister interest had so long protected

them. And for doing this Sir James catches eagerly every opportunity of loading him with reproaches. It is for this, that he, and they whom it suits Sir James to associate with him, are held forth to the world as fools and knaves, deluding themselves with ideas of their own consequence, and seeking to impose upon the world by false pretences.

As an instance of this self-delusion in Mr. Bentham, Sir James says, that he actually entertained hopes that Russia would receive a code from him, and that North America would renounce "the variety of her laws and institutions," on his single authority. This is a very gross misrepresentation. In consequence of correspondence with men of influence in both countries, on the subject of a reform of their laws, Mr. Bentham was induced to say to both of them, if you really design to reform your laws, and think that I can be of use to you in the undertaking, I must tell you the way in which to me it appears that my labours can be rendered most advantageous to you. It is in making for you the draught of a code. This I will do, upon your invitation, without pay or reward, and without any other condition, than that you shall print and publish it; after which, you shall make whatever use of it may to you seem meet. In the simplicity of his heart Mr. Bentham believed that there could be no harm in making this proposal to the go-

vernments themselves, little thinking of those whom Sir James knew he would delight by representing it as a ludicrous and contemptible instance of over-grown vanity and conceit.

Mr. Bentham's merit in rousing the spirit of law reform, Sir James says, ought to have done two things. It ought to have consoled him for the disappointment of his ridiculous hopes. And "it ought to have disposed his followers to do fuller justice to the Romillys and Broughams." That his followers, and all other men, ought to do justice to the Romillys and Broughams, is most certain. But it is not so easy to see how the merit of Mr. Bentham should be a reason for it? Wherein, moreover, have those whom he most probably intends to mark by the name of followers of Mr. Bentham, failed in doing justice to the Romillys and the Broughams? Sir James does not tell us any thing those two reformers had done which remained without due acknowledgement. With respect to them, he, according to custom, uses vague, eulogistic terms; "prudence and energy"—"reason and eloquence." And then he gives us this valuable remark, that without the prudence and energy, the reason and eloquence, of these two individuals, "the best plans of reformation must have remained a dead letter." How little did Sir James know about the matter! The question, whether law was to be reformed or not reformed, did not depend,

thank God! upon the existence of any two men whatsoever. Law would have been reformed had these men never been born. They had the merit of being the first men of station in this country who caught the spirit of law reform; and one of them has lived to render it signal service. But if they had not, others most assuredly would. The fulness of time was come. The harvest was ripe for the sickle, and there would not have been wanting men to put it in.

Even here, Sir James must return to his favourite pastime of abusing Mr. Bentham, for having covered with shame the efforts of the sinister interest to uphold profitable abuses. The merit of the Romillys and Broughams ought to have had two effects; it ought to have procured praise, the Lord knows how much, to the Romillys and Broughams; and it ought to have saved from blame all those who had laboured in the opposite direction, viz., to do evil and prevent good. The sinister interest, and its operation, the cause of the worst evils which have afflicted mankind, Sir James tells us are only "doubts, whether sudden changes, almost always imposed by violence on a community, be the surest road to lasting improvement." This is a curious exhibition. The man who exposes the cruel operation of the sinister interest, is held up in the light of a man proposing sudden changes imposed by violence; and those who are the authors

of that cruel operation are only men who doubt whether sudden changes, imposed by violence, are the surest road to lasting improvement. The sinister interest, according to Sir James, is your only true lover of the lasting improvement. Reform is only safe in the hands of those who have an interest in preventing it. The insinuation with respect to Mr. Bentham marks indelibly the character of Sir James. When did Mr. Bentham recommend any sudden change, importing the need of violence to impose it on a community?

Such is the information relative to the great business of Mr. Bentham's life, jurisprudence, which Sir James found himself competent to impart to us. Yet Sir James, once in his life, was a teacher, Lord guide us! of jurisprudence; and we possess, left behind him, his introductory discourse. Dr. Beattie says, somewhere, of Bolingbroke's "Idea of a Patriot King," that it is *vox et præterea nihil.* But it is a discourse loaded with matter compared with this of Sir James.

Sir James now comes to give his account of what is ethical in the writings of Mr. Bentham. In this part, it is necessary, in order to answer any useful purpose, to be minute with Sir James. And as Sir James is a man of many words, and few ideas, the being minute with him is being minute with his words. Nothing can hinder this

from being tedious; but I hope to make it apparent that it is useful.

"It is unfortunate," says Sir James, "that ethical theory, with which we are now chiefly concerned, is not the province in which Mr. Bentham has reached the most desirable distinction." It is probable that Sir James meant here to cast an injurious reflection. It is said of a man that he has not reached the most desirable distinction, when he is distinguished for something bad. If Sir James meant only that Mr. Bentham had not reached the highest distinction, in ethical science, that is, in a science in which he had never tried to reach any, having only touched upon it, as a preliminary to jurisprudence, and no further than was necessary to that end, the observation is nugatory.

Sir James next tells us, with an air of discovery, that the master of a school generally does much to give a character to the school. Who else should? He also says, that Mr. Bentham thought himself the discoverer of the principle of utility. This is worth mentioning only as a specimen of what Sir James was about, when he was thinking. But now we come to the first of his philosophical objections. "That," he says, "in which Mr. Bentham really differs from others is in the necessity which he teaches, and the example which he sets, of constantly bringing that principle before us." This is not true. Mr. Bentham says no

more about the necessity of looking to his principle, than every other philosopher says about the necessity of looking to his.

However, Sir James says, "this peculiarity appears to us to be his radical error." If he means, that taking utility for the principle of morality is his radical error, we can understand him. He dissents from this doctrine, and that is all. But if he means, that Mr. Bentham differed from other philosophers in this, that he taught the necessity of looking to the principle of morality, and they did not, this is not true; and would be a distinction singularly in favour of Mr. Bentham, if it were. Every philosopher teaches the necessity of bringing perpetually before us what he deems the principle of morality; right reason, one; the will of God, another; and so on. Mr. Bentham does the same; and not more than they do.—Sir James concludes thus his account of this error. "In an attempt, of which the constitution of human nature forbids the success," (namely, bringing the principle of morality continually before us), "he seems to us to have been led into fundamental errors in moral theory, and to have given to his practical doctrine a dangerous taint." Observe the connection of this talk. Sir James first tells us, the bringing the principle of morality continually before us, is Mr. Bentham's radical error. He now says,—in this error, Mr. Bentham falls into fundamental errors. He falls into

fundamental errors, in his radical error. And this curious case of falling, on the part of Mr. Bentham, viz., his recommending, along with all other philosophers, a vigilant attention to the principle of morality, gives a dangerous taint to his practical doctrine. Does it, indeed? The thing cannot be done, says Sir James. That is, no man is perfectly true to the principle of morality; every man is guilty of deviations. But is that a reason why every man should not be taught to be true to it? Sir James's practical doctrine, at least, seems to have a very dangerous taint in it.

Sir James has another paragraph, long and intricate, which seems to be intended for an illustration of this error of Mr. Bentham.

"The necessity of constantly bringing the principle of utility," by which Mr. Bentham understands the principle of morality, "perpetually before us," is now called, making "utility the chief motive of human conduct."

Does Sir James mean to deny that the principle of morality is the rightful guide and controller of human conduct? Does he mean to affirm, that when a man clearly determines that it is right for him to do such a thing, wrong to do such another thing, a motive may exist, entitled to overbear the obligation of morality? If so, what becomes of all that noisy talk we had about Butler's "discovery;" that conscience alone is entitled to com-

mand? Is Butler to be praised, Bentham abused, for one and the same thing? Conscience commanding, is only another name for acting according to the principle of morality; but how can a man be said to act according to a principle, if he does not bring it before him.

Sir James is at great pains with this principle of his, that the principle of morality is not the chief motive of human conduct. He says, "the confusion of moral approbation with the moral qualities which are its objects, already mentioned at the opening of this dissertation, has led Mr. Bentham to assume, that because the principle of utility forms a necessary part of every moral theory, it ought therefore to be the chief motive of human conduct." We have here a reference to that charge against Bentham and Paley, which we formerly considered, and shewed to be about the strangest thing that ever dropped from a pen. This confusion, which Bentham never committed, *i. e.* a nothing, a thing without existence, led Mr. Bentham to draw a conclusion. What conclusion? Why this;—"the principle of utility forms a necessary part of every moral theory, therefore it ought to be the chief motive of human conduct." Now to the fact. Mr. Bentham never drew such a conclusion in his life. He never said, or dreamed of saying, that any thing's being a part of a moral theory, constituted it necessarily the chief motive of human conduct. In fact he

never said, that the principle of morality was a motive at all. He knew better the meaning of the word. His doctrine of motives was, that neither morality nor immorality belongs to motives, but to a different part of the mental process.

Sir James lays down his own doctrine, as if in refutation of Mr. Bentham. "A theory founded on utility requires that we should cultivate, as excitements to practice, those other habitual dispositions, which we know by experience to be generally the source of actions beneficial to ourselves and our fellows; habits of feeling productive of habits of virtuous conduct, and in them more strengthened by the re-action of these last."

We have occasion, first, for a little verbal criticism. Dispositions are made by cultivation. Sir James says, the habitual dispositions, that is, dispositions with respect to which there is no longer need of cultivation, should be cultivated. He does not mean this; but it shews how little capable he was of expressing a meaning.

The doctrine is, that there are dispositions auxiliary to virtue, and that they ought to be cultivated. This is a truth which no man who ever reflected upon these things was ignorant of, and which no man in the world ever denied. What was the "disposition" of Sir James when he gave it to be understood that Mr. Bentham had either denied it, or overlooked it?

We pick up, as we go on, that the feelings he

speaks of are "the social affections, felt with the utmost warmth." He then tells us something about social affections. They "give birth to more comprehensive benevolence." That is to say, the love of John, and of Kate, gives birth to the love of a whole parish. But the social affections, when they give birth to the more comprehensive benevolence, "are not supplanted by it." That is to say, the love of Kate and of John, when it has begotten the love of the parish, remains the love of Kate and of John all the same. Further, when the social affections are felt with the utmost warmth, "the moral sentiments most strongly approve what is right and good." This is rather puzzling. Does it mean, that when the love of John and of Kate is felt with the utmost warmth, the moral sentiments most strongly approve a reform of the law, for example, which is undoubtedly right and good; one of the most right and good of all possible things? Again, the moral sentiments, under the love of John and Kate, "are not perplexed by a calculation of consequences." Here Sir James gets hold of the hack argument against the principle of utility. It requires calculation, and men are not good at calculating. Is action to be always suspended, till calculation is performed?

The shallowness, evinced by this talk, is astonishing; and yet it has been held by men of considerable name. Is it possible to avoid per-

ceiving, at a glance, that it utterly subverts morality?

Mr. Bentham demonstrated that the morality of an act does not depend upon the motive. The same motive may give birth to acts which are of the most opposite nature. The man who earns five shillings by his day's labour, and the man who robs him of it as he is returning at night to his home, both act from the same motive, the desire of obtaining a few shillings.

Mr. Bentham further demonstrated, that the morality of an act is altogether dependant on the intention. One man fires a gun at a partridge, and kills it; another man fires a gun at a partridge, but kills his brother. If care was not wanting to ascertain whether any person was exposed, the latter act, notwithstanding its fatal consequences, was as void of guilt as the former.

The intention has a reference exclusively to the consequences of the act. When a man performs an act, he is said to intend the consequences of it, those at least which he foresees. He induces, for example, a married woman to yield to his impure desires, aware of the ruin which it is calculated to bring upon herself, and the sufferings which it may inflict on her children and husband. These consequences, as far as foreseen, or capable of being foreseen, he is said to intend.

Sir James's talk implies, that he committed the miserable blunder of confounding motive, and

intention. Let us attend a little to this point. The motive regards one, or a few, of the consequences of the act; the intention regards them all. In the case above stated, the pleasure to the seducer is the *motive* to the seduction, and is *one* consequence of the act; the intention includes both that and its other consequences. These consequences in this case evidently divide themselves into two sorts; the one sort, pleasurable, viz. to the author of the act; the other, painful, viz. to other persons.

When the consequences of the act are pleasurable to other persons, as well as to the actor, the case, is simple; the intention has in it nothing but what is good. When, however, among the consequences of the act, some are hurtful to others, consideration is required. If they are hurtful to others to a certain degree, and pleasurable to the actor in a less degree, the conclusion of all men is, that it is wrong, immoral, to perform the act. The question, ought, or ought not, the act to be performed, is evidently a question of comparison. There is a certain amount of good on the one side; a certain amount of evil on the other: which preponderates? If a man intends by any act a greater amount of evil than of good, his intention is bad; his conduct criminal. Morality, or immorality, therefore, depends, by the very nature of the case, upon calculation. A man cannot act without intention, without looking at

the consequences of his act. If he looks imperfectly at them; that is, takes not the necessary pains to ascertain the evil, which the act may do to others, and nevertheless performs it, he is criminal with regard to all the consequences which he might have foreseen. An intention therefore is good or bad, according as the good or evil consequences of the act predominate. This is ascertained by calculation.

The calculation is, no doubt, in many cases, easy; the preponderance of good, or of evil, being such, that no man can be at a loss about it. The greater number of cases, also, are classified; and placed under general rules, universally recognized; so that a man acts upon them, as pre-established decisions, which he may trust. Such are the rules of prudence, of temperance, of justice, of fortitude. The acts to which these names are clearly applicable, are acts the good consequences of which are recognized as greatly overbalancing the bad. A man feels himself exempted from the obligation of calculating in such cases, because the calculation has already been made.

It is of importance, that the learner should familiarize to himself this fundamental truth; though it is almost in fact an identical proposition. Without an immoral intention there is no immoral act. An intention is immoral in two cases; first, when a man acts with a foreknowledge of the preponderance of evil consequences;

secondly, when he acts without inquiring, that is, without caring, whether there will be a preponderance of evil consequences or not. The goodness or badness of an act is the goodness or badness of the intention. The goodness or badness of the intention is the superiority of good over evil, or evil over good, in the consequences of the act performed; a superiority ascertained by calculation, either made by the individual, or presumed to be correctly expressed in a general rule. The men, therefore, philosophers they ought not to be called, who preach a morality without calculation, take away morality altogether; because morality is an attribute of intention; and an intention is then only good when the act intended has in the sum of its ascertainable consequences a superiority of good over evil. Take away calculation, you take away the goodness or badness of intention, and without goodness of intention there is no morality. Where there is no calculation, therefore, there is no morality; in fact, there is nothing rational, any more than moral. To act, without regard to consequences, is the property of an irrational nature. But to act without calculation is to act without a regard to consequences. The best morality, says Sir James, is to act without regard to consequences. It is fortunate that Sir James's instructions are not calculated to have much effect.

When "the moral sentiments" act "without

the calculation of consequences, they are not incapable of being gradually rectified by reason;" that is to say, when they go wrong for want of calculation, they are capable of being set right by calculation. Sir James adds, "whenever they are decisively proved by experience not to correspond in some of their parts to the universal and perpetual effects of conduct." Is not this precious jargon?

"Some of their parts;" some of the parts of the moral sentiments. Do the moral sentiments then consist of parts?

"When the moral sentiments do not correspond to the effects of conduct." What is meant by the moral sentiments not corresponding to the effects of conduct? The "effects of conduct" mean, I suppose, the consequences of acts, good or evil, as we have been speaking of them above. When Sir James then says, that the moral sentiments do not always correspond with the effects of conduct, he means that they do not correspond with the distinction between good and evil, in the consequences of acts; that is, approve of acts which produce a preponderance of evil, disapprove of acts which produce a preponderance of good. No wonder they commit such blunders, if they decide according to the warm affections, without calculation. But when this happens, Sir James says, there is a remedy; these moral sentiments, which blunder so, may be set right by that which, according to Sir James, would have set them wrong, calculation.

"Reason," Sir James here calls it, by a tle sleight of hand. But "reason," in ascertaining the balance of two amounts, the amount of evil consequences, and the amount of good, is honest, dry calculation, and nothing else, whatever Sir James may think.

Sir James, however, in these words, admits, that the moral sentiments ought to "correspond with the effects of conduct," and that calculation is that alone which can make them do so. Yet he tells us that calculation is that which disgraces the principle of utility. What a Sir James!

"Universal and perpetual effects of conduct," is the expression of Sir James; and is worth remarking, to shew Sir James's skill in expressing his own meaning. By "effects of conduct," he can mean nothing but consequences of acts. But what is meant by "universal and perpetual" consequences of acts? This can relate to nothing but constancy of sequence, and means the consequences which are not accidental. But it is not true, that the moral sentiments regard only the invariable consequences of acts. The accidental consequences, when they can be foreseen, deserve as much attention, as the invariable; only it more frequently happens that they cannot be foreseen.

Sir James enforces his argument against calculation, which he seems to have it greatly at heart to decry, by saying, "It is a false representation

of human nature to affirm that courage is only prudence;" and he quotes Mr. Mill, as the author of that affirmation. He explains what he supposes Mr. Mill to mean, by saying, "a man who fights because he thinks it more hazardous to yield is not brave." Sir James says, Mr. Mill has made "a false representation of human nature;" Sir James makes "a false representation" of Mr. Mill. That *computatio*, or συλλογισμος; that *thinking together*, of the effects, good and bad, of an act, which I have just described as essential to a moral intention, that is, a moral act, is not expressed, in the case of an act of courage, by the phrase "more hazardous to yield than to fight;" any more than it would be, in the case supposed above, of the man seducing the woman, by the phrase, more safe to abstain than to go on. This is not the main part of the consideration, as it is put by Mr. Mill.

Mr. Mill had shewn, in what way our ideas of pains and pleasures, and our ideas of the causes of them, combined into complex ideas by association, constitute the various affections of our nature, that is, the pleasurable and painful states, other than sensations, of which we are conscious. He had shewn, that in many of these combinations the idea of the cause of the pleasure or pleasures, of the pain or pains, so predominated in the compound, as to obscure, or even render imperceptible, the idea of the pleasures or pains

themselves. This explanation will enable the reader to understand the following quotations from Mr. Mill, which are necessary to shew, in what way Sir James deals with those authors, whom it is his object to defame.

"We have already remarked," says Mr. Mill, "that of all the causes of our pleasures and pains, none are to be compared, in point of importance, with the actions of ourselves and our fellow-creatures. From this class of causes, a far greater amount of pleasures and pains proceed, than from all other causes taken together. It follows that these causes are objects of intense affection to us; either favourable, if they are the cause of pleasure, or unfavourable, if they are the cause of pain.

"The actions from which men derive advantage have all been classed under four titles; prudence, fortitude, justice, beneficence.

"We apply the names, prudent, brave, just, beneficent, both to our own acts, and to the acts of other men.

"When these names are applied to our own acts, the first two, prudent and brave, express acts which are useful to ourselves in the first instance; the latter two, justice, and beneficence, express acts which are useful to others in the first instance.

"It is further to be remarked, that those acts of ours, which are primarily useful to ourselves,

are secondarily useful to others; and those which are primarily useful to others, are secondarily useful to ourselves. Thus, it is by our prudence, and fortitude, that we are best enabled to do acts of justice and beneficence to others. And it is by acts of justice, and beneficence to others, that we best dispose them to do similar acts to us."

After these explanations Mr. Mill proceeds to examine the associations into which the ideas of these actions, as causes of good, enter.

"We have two sets of associations," he says, "with the acts which are thus named," viz. prudent, brave, just, beneficent;—"one set of associations, when they are considered as our own acts; another set, when they are considered as the acts of other men.

"When they are considered as our own acts; in other words, when we consider our own prudence, bravery, justice, and beneficence, we have associations with them of the following kind.

"With our own acts of prudence and bravery, we associate good to ourselves; that is, either pleasure or the cause of pleasure, as the immediate consequent. Acts of prudence, for example, are divided into two sorts; the sort productive of good, and the sort preventive of evil. All acts which add to our wealth, power, and dignity, or any one of them, so far as they produce this effect, without counterbalancing evil, may be called acts of prudence. Thus, incessant labour,

by all those to whom it is necessary for subsistence, or for reputation, is a course of prudence. Prudence, however, in its common acceptation, is more employed to denote the acts by which we avoid evils, than those by which we obtain good; those by which we reject present pleasures, when followed by pains which overbalance them, and those by which we endure present pains when they prevent the following of greater pains. It thus appears, that for acts of prudence, knowledge is required. It is the choice, among the acts within our power, of those the consequences of which constitute the greatest amount of good."

And now we come to Sir James's courage.

"When we perform," says Mr. Mill, "acts of courage or fortitude, the chance of evil is incurred for the sake of a preponderant good. If the good were not a balance for the chance of evil, the consequences of the act would not be a balance of good. The act would not be a moral act, and would have no title to the name of courage. Knowledge, therefore, is as necessary to the exercise of this virtue, as to that of prudence. Courage, in fact, is but a species of the acts of prudence; a class, selected for distinction by a particular name; that class in which evils of a particular description are to be hazarded for the sake of a preponderant good.

"When, with the ideas of our acts of prudence, and acts of courage, past, and future, have been

associated, sufficiently often, the class of benefits, which are the consequences of them, they are no longer simple ideas, indifferent ideas; they are complex pleasurable ideas. That is, they are affections;" and affections of any degree of intensity and power.

Now then, let us see how this account corresponds with the representation of Sir James. He makes Mr. Mill say, that courage consists in fighting only when there is more danger in running away; as if the whole consideration was a balance of chances against the life of the individual. Is it possible, that this was any thing else, than an intended misrepresentation? Do not Mr. Mill's words, as clearly as it is possible for words to express an idea, declare, that it is a balance of good upon all the consequences of the act, which makes it an act fit to be performed; and that this is the grand property in which an act of courage agrees with an act of prudence? So much so, that in a case in which the death of the individual is certain, courage may require that he maintain his post.

Having considered the associations we each of us have with our own acts of prudence, fortitude, justice, and beneficence, Mr. Mill proceeds to the associations we have with such acts, when performed by other people; and, when he comes to courage, says, "We have seen that fortitude is the name of that class of acts, in which a good

is aimed at by the risk of a great evil. There is a grand class of cases in which the good aimed at is not the peculiar good of the individual by whom the act or series of acts is performed, but a good common to others, to a whole people. Of course, in such a case, we have a strong association of our own pleasures, or exemption from pains, with other men's courage, whether we are sharing with them in the danger, or exempted from it by their acts. This association is such as to constitute a very strong affection. Even when the good sought by the act of courage is only the good of the individual, we have with it a sufficient association of pleasurable ideas to constitute it an affection. We have, first of all, an agreeable association with the balance of good which the act is calculated to produce to the actor. And next we have a very powerful association of pleasure with the state of mind in which the idea of a great evil is controlled by the idea of a greater good. When the motive exists to do us good in a man who has such a mind, he will not be deterred by the prospect of an inadequate evil. When we encounter danger in company with such a man, we shall not be exposed to greater danger by his deserting us."

What Sir James poorly smatters afterwards, when he fancies he gives us information about the formation of habits, is unworthy of notice; except where he concludes, by saying, "the best

writers of Mr. Bentham's school overlook the indissolubility of these associations" (viz. those by which habits are formed,) "and appear not to bear in mind that their strength and rapid action constitute the perfect state of a moral agent." This is almost incredible, in a man who includes Mr. Mill by name among those writers. It is Mr. Mill, who first made known the great importance of the principle of the indissoluble association. It is he, who has shewn, that various mental phenomena, which had puzzled all preceding inquirers, may be satisfactorily accounted for, by application to them of the principle of indissoluble association. It is by aid of this principle, that he has performed all the more important parts of his analytical process. And yet Sir James is capable of setting him down among those who have neglected that principle.

Either Sir James never read the book; and then he imputed errors to it, without knowing or caring, whether he spoke truth or falsehood; or, if he had read the book, he spoke falsehood wilfully. I suppose the former case, which is the common case with Sir James; for this dissertation proves, beyond all possibility of doubt, that, pretending to read every thing, he read hardly any thing; but nevertheless made his criticisms, laudatory, or condemnatory, as he found the motive, with as much assurance as if his acquaintance with the books he criticised had been familiar and complete.

These two objections, first, that Mr. Bentham made the principle of morality the sole motive to a virtuous act, in which we have seen that Sir James confounded motive and intention, and at the same time spoke in defiance of evidence; secondly, that Mr. Bentham made calculation, *alias*, good intention, to form a necessary part of every virtuous act; constitute, in reality, the whole of Sir James's argument against the ethical system of Mr. Bentham.

Sir James, however, goes on to arraign good intention, under the name of calculation, by ascribing to it a couple of deplorable effects.

First, it prevents "the inherent delight of the virtuous affections from being duly estimated."

Secondly, it prevents the "beneficial effect of good conduct on the frame of the mind," from being attended to.

At least, he affirms, that those whom he calls the followers of Mr. Bentham are guilty of those faults.

He couches both accusations in the following words: "The followers of Mr. Bentham have carried to an unusual extent the prevalent fault of the more modern advocates of utility, who have dwelt so exclusively on the outward advantages of virtue" (viz. those beneficial consequences of an act which form the essence of good intention,) "as to have lost sight of the delight which is a part of virtuous feeling" (the

first of the two grounds of accusation); "and of the beneficial influence of good actions upon the frame of the mind,"—which is the second.

This is a matter, on which we must dwell with the more minuteness, because it is one on which Sir James lays stress. He treats of it with seeming fervour, and is unwilling to leave it. He desires that virtue should be considered to be the offspring of the affections. But what is still more remarkable, and calls more urgently upon our attention, he represents the having of the affections as the main thing, the performing the acts, as of minor importance.

From what Sir James says immediately afterwards, in a wordy panegyric on the "delight of virtuous feeling," we learn that by "virtuous feeling," he means the social affections. The social affections are such as gratitude, pity, love of kindred, love of country, benevolence to individuals generally, and so on.

Sir James sings a loud song about the delight which he says forms "a part" of these feelings. This expression shews full well, that of the composition of these feelings Sir James was ignorant. Delight a part of gratitude! He might as well have talked of pain's being "a part" of the prick of a needle. What any other man would have said is, that gratitude is a pleasurable feeling. The feeling is not one thing, the pleasure another. The feeling is one of that class of feelings which

are pleasurable; as gold is of that class of things which are yellow.

Allowing then these affections to be as delightful as Sir James thought it was fine to call them; let them, if it will please him, be ten times more delightful than experience shews them to be, how does that affect the necessity of a good intention to a moral act? And how does the necessity of a good intention, and of that regard to consequences in which it consists; or rather, how does the inculcating that necessity, with any degree of earnestness, argue an ignorance, in any respect, of the value of the social affections? Is a man, because the social affections are delightful, not to look to the consequences of his acts? Is he, because he has a great pleasure in pleasing somebody, to perform an act which will please him, whatever the consequences? Is he not to balance the consequences, if they are partly good, and partly evil; and to abstain from the act altogether, how intense soever the "delight" of his social feeling, if the bad consequences preponderate? Sir James's delightful affections operate by producing motives; and though in constituting motives they operate generally in the right direction, they do occasionally operate in the wrong; and would do so to a deplorable extent, if they were not held in continual restraint by the obligation, which every man feels, of acting with a good intention; that is, with a due regard to all the

consequences of his acts; that is, with honest calculation; that is, in obedience to the principle of utility.

The accusation, then, of Mr. Bentham and "his followers," that they attended so much to the intention implied in the act, that they did not attend enough to the intensity of the pleasure which in a class of cases incites to the act, is purely ridiculous. Did not Sir James perceive, that the more violent this incitement, if the man is not effectually controled by the regard to consequences, the greater is the danger of his acting immorally? No; Sir James saw no such thing. He did not even see that motive is one thing, and intention another.

The stress, then, of this accusation against Mr. Bentham, and those whom it pleases Sir James to call his followers, is, that they inculcated on men, attention to the consequences of their acts too much; attention to the delight of the social affections too little. The answer is, that they did neither. Mr. Mill, among those who are probably included in Sir James's term "followers," is the only one who has written any thing on the subject. He and Mr. Bentham, so far from having neglected the social affections, have spoken of them, and of the consequences of acts, as far as their subject required, and no farther. Their subject was the theory of morals, not the practice. They had to expound those phenomena of our

nature which involve the judgment we form of actions as right and wrong. Their duty was exposition solely. Inculcation is the province of the practical moralist; and it is for him to tell how much, with a view to good consequences, the social affections deserve cultivation; whether the selfish pleasure of having them, which Sir James makes such a rant about, is the only object in view, or the beneficial actions to which, as contributing to the formation of motives, they incite.

But however insignificant the inculpatory language of Sir James is thus seen to be, it is material to shew against what a power of evidence that his accusation was unfounded and discreditable, he chose to deliver it to the world.

Mr. Bentham, in expounding the business of law, had much to do with intentions, and motives; the former, as the ground on which an agent becomes the subject of punishment or reward; the latter, as the instrument with which the legislator has to operate, both in preventing bad actions, and producing good.

The origin of motives is pleasures and pains. For the sake of tracing motives to their origin, Mr. Bentham gives a list of pleasures and pains. In his list of pleasures are found, the pleasures of amity, the pleasures of a good name, the pleasures of benevolence. Of these last, he says; "the pleasures of benevolence are the pleasures resulting from the view of any pleasures supposed to be

possessed by the beings who may be the objects of benevolence; to wit, the sensitive beings we are acquainted with; under which are commonly included,—1, the Supreme Being; 2, human beings; 3, other animals. These may also be called the pleasures of good will, the pleasures of sympathy, or the pleasures of the benevolent or social affections."

We now turn to the account which he gives of the motives which spring from these pleasures, when we shall see not only the place which they hold among the causes of good actions, but the restraint under which they need to be held to prevent their becoming the cause of bad actions.

"To the pleasures of sympathy," he says,* "corresponds the motive which, in a neutral sense, is termed good-will. The word sympathy may also be used on this occasion: though the sense of it seems to be rather more extensive. In a good sense, it is styled benevolence; and in certain cases, philanthropy; and, in a figurative way, brotherly love; in others, humanity; in others, charity; in others, pity and compassion; in others, mercy; in others, gratitude; in others, tenderness; in others, patriotism; in others, public spirit. Love is also employed in this as in so many other senses. In a bad sense, it has no name applicable to it in all cases: in particular

* Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation, ch. 10. § 25.

cases it is styled partiality. The word zeal, with certain epithets prefixed to it, might also be employed sometimes on this occasion, though the sense of it be more extensive; applying sometimes to ill as well as to good will. It is thus we speak of party zeal, national zeal, and public zeal. The word attachment is also used with the like epithets: we also say family-attachment. The French expression, *esprit de corps*, for which as yet there seems to be scarcely any name in English, might be rendered, in some cases, though rather inadequately, by the terms corporation spirit, corporation attachment, or corporation zeal.

"1. A man who has set a town on fire is apprehended and committed: out of regard or compassion for him, you help him to break prison. In this case the generality of people will probably scarcely know whether to condemn your motive or applaud it: those who condemn your conduct, will be disposed rather to impute it to some other motive: if they style it benevolence or compassion, they will be for prefixing an epithet, and calling it false benevolence or false compassion.*

* Among the Greeks, perhaps the motive, and the conduct it gave birth to, would, in such a case, have been rather approved than disapproved of. It seems to have been deemed an act of heroism on the part of Hercules, to have delivered his friend Theseus from hell: though divine justice, which held him there, should naturally have been regarded as being at least upon a footing with human justice. But to divine justice, even when acknowledged under that character, the respect paid

2. The man is taken again, and is put upon his trial: to save him you swear falsely in his favour. People, who would not call your motive a bad one before, will perhaps call it so now. 3. A man is at law with you about an estate: he has no right to it: the judge knows this, yet, having an esteem or affection for your adversary, adjudges it to him. In this case the motive is by every body deemed abominable, and is termed injustice and partiality. 4. You detect a statesman in receiving bribes: out of regard to the public interest, you give information of it, and prosecute him. In this case, by all who acknowledge your conduct to have originated from this motive, your motive will be deemed a laudable one, and styled public spirit. But his friends and adherents will not choose to account for your conduct in any such manner: they will rather attribute it to party enmity. 5. You will find a man on the point of starving: you relieve him; and save his life. In this case your motive will by every body be accounted laudable, and it will be termed compassion, pity, charity, benevolence. Yet in all these cases the motive is the same: it is neither more nor less than the motive of good-will."

at that time of day does not seem to have been very profound, or well-settled: at present, the respect paid to is profound and settled enough, though the name of it is but too often applied to dictates which could have had no other origin than the worst sort of human caprice.

After enumerating all the classes of motives, and tracing them to their origin, he comes to consider the order of pre-eminence among them; when he says, "Of all these sorts of motives, good-will is that of which the dictates, taken in a general view, are surest of coinciding with those of the principle of utility. For the dictates of utility are neither more nor less than the dictates of the most extensive and enlightened (that is, well-advised) benevolence. The dictates of the other motives may be conformable to those of utility, or repugnant, as it may happen."

This throws light not only on Sir James's charge, that Mr. Bentham, and those who think as he does, overlook the value, as a source of motives, of the social affections; but also on that other charge, that they represent the principle of utility as the only motive of a moral act.

Mr. Mill, whose object it was to analyze all those states of mind, and shew wherein they consist, goes more minutely to work.

He considers the state of mind, which is generated by the idea of a pleasure or train of pleasures associated with the idea of its cause; and he shews that this is what has received the generical name of love, or affection. I shall pass over what he says of the case in which other causes enter into this association, either immediate and particular, or remote and general, of which last the more remarkable species are, wealth,

dignity, and power; and shall come to those cases in which the idea of our fellow-creatures, as cause of our pleasures, enters into the associations which we call affections. He begins the subject in this manner*:—

"Wealth, power, and dignity, being the origin of such powerful affections as we find them to be, though the causes of pleasure to us only by being the causes of the actions of our fellow-creatures; it would be wonderful if our fellow-creatures themselves, the more immediate causes of those actions, should not be the origin of affections. But this is not the case; our fellow-creatures are the origin of affections of the greatest influence in human life; to the enumeration of which it is now our business to proceed."

He thus goes on:—

"We contemplate our fellow creatures, as cause of our pleasures, either individually, or in groups. We shall consider the several cases which have attracted sufficient attention to be distinguished by names. 1. That of friendship. 2. That of kindness. 3. That of family. 4. That of country. 5. That of party. 6. That of mankind."

To exemplify the mode in which he presents the analysis of these cases, I shall select kindness, and the family affection.

Of kindness he says, "There is nothing which

* Analysis of the Human Mind, ch. 21. sub.-sect. 2.

more instantly associates with itself the ideas of our own pleasures and pains, than the idea of the pleasures and pains of another of our fellow creatures. The expositions already afforded sufficiently indicate the source of this association, which exerts a powerful and salutary influence in human life. The idea of a man enjoying a train of pleasures, or happiness, is felt by every body to be a pleasurable idea. The idea of a man under a train of sufferings or pains is equally felt to be a painful idea. This can arise from nothing but the association of our own pleasures with the first idea, and of our own pains with the second. We never feel any pains and pleasures but our own. The fact indeed, is, that our very idea of the pains or pleasures of another man is only the idea of our own pains or our own pleasures associated with the idea of another man. This is one, not of the least important and curious of all cases of association; and instantly shews how powerful must be the association of ideas of our own pains and pleasures, in a feeling so compounded. The pleasurable association composed of the ideas of a man and his pleasures, and the painful association composed of the ideas of a man and his pains, are both affections; which have so much of the same tendency, that they are included under one name, kindness; though the latter affection has a name appropriate to itself, compassion."

When Mr. Mill comes to the case of family, he says, "The group, which consists of a father, mother, and children, is called a family. The associations which each member of this group has of his pains and pleasures, with the pains and pleasures of the other members, constitute some of the most interesting states of human consciousness.

"The affection of the husband and wife is, in its origin, that of two persons of different sex, and needs not be farther analysed. To this source of pleasurable association is added, when the union is happy, all those other associations, just enumerated, which constitute the affection of friendship. To this another addition is made by the union of interests; or that necessity under which they are placed, of deriving pain and pleasure from the same causes. Though in too many instances, these pleasurable associations are extinguished, by the generation of others of an opposite description; in other cases they are carried to such a height, as to afford an exemplification of that remarkable state of mind, in which a greater value seems to be set upon the means, than upon the end. Persons have been found, the one of whom could not endure to live without the other."

Mr. Mill next proceeds to analyse the parental affection; but thinks it necessary to do this with so much minuteness, that the passage is too long

for quotation. After treating both of this and the filial affection, he comes to that which exists among brothers and sisters. "This has in it," he says, "most of the ingredients which go to the composition of friendship. There is, first of all, companionship; the habit of enjoying pleasures in common, and also of suffering pains; hence a great readiness in sympathising with one another; that is, in associating trains, each of his own pains and pleasures, with the pains and pleasures of the rest. There is next, where the education is good, a constant reciprocation, to the extent of their power, of beneficent acts. And lastly, there is their common relation to the grand source of all their pleasures, the parent."

Mr. Mill concludes his exposition of the family affections with these words:—"When the affections of the domestic class exist in perfection (in such a state of education and morals as ours this rarely can happen), they afford so constant a succession of agreeable trains, that they form, perhaps, the most valuable portion of human happiness. Acts of beneficence to the larger masses of mankind afford still more interesting trains to those who perform them. But they are the small number. The happiness of the domestic affections is open to all."

What has now been adduced is abundantly sufficient to shew, that when Sir James brought his charge against Mr. Bentham and Mr. Mill, of

not having spoken enough of the pleasures of the social affections, and of having spoken too much of the obligation on a moral agent of attention to the consequences of his acts, he spoke in the teeth of conclusive evidence, and with a disgraceful ignorance of his subject.

After explaining how the social affections are formed, Mr. Mill explains by what change in these associations they become motives, and the cause of acts; and, in what manner, namely, by acting in frequent obedience to those motives, the corresponding *disposition* is created, namely, a facility of being acted upon by those motives, or a tendency to the performance of the acts,—acts, which for the most part are good, but may be evil to any extent, and need, therefore, the control of attention to the moral principle, as completely as the acts which flow from any other class of motives.

So much, then, for the truth of the charge, that "the followers of Mr. Bentham have lost sight of the delight which is a part of virtuous feeling."

Those, however, have seen but little of Sir James who have not looked at his words. I therefore think it important, both for the advantage of shewing Sir James in his true colours, and the instruction which may be derived from a specimen of the mode of cross-questioning delinquent words, to look at the phrases in which he clothed his wisdom on this occasion.

"The followers of Mr. Bentham," says Sir James, "have carried to an unusual extent the prevalent fault of the more modern advocates of utility, who have dwelt so exclusively on the outward advantages of virtue as to have lost sight of the delight which is a part of virtuous feeling, and of the beneficial influence of good actions upon the mind. 'Benevolence towards others,' says Mr. Mill, 'produces a return of benevolence from them.' The fact is true, and ought to be stated. But how unimportant is it in comparison with that which is passed over in silence, the pleasure of the affection itself, which if it could become lasting and intense, would convert the heart into a heaven!"

Mr. Mill says that benevolence produces a return of benevolence. Is this, then, all which Mr. Mill said about benevolence? Are not the passages above cited some proof to the contrary?

Mr. Mill "passed over in silence the pleasure of the affection itself." He was not an ordinary man who could venture upon this assertion. Mr. Mill had traced home to their source, not one, but all of the social affections; and had shewn by distinct analysis that they are entirely composed of pleasurable feelings; in fact that they are, each, a cluster of pleasurable feelings; that is, pleasure itself; constituting in their best form one of the most valuable portions of human happiness. In fact, they could not enter into motives

without being pleasures; and Mr. Mill treats of them as constituting a most important class of motives.

Mr. Mill not only shews that these affections are composed of pleasures, but further, that they operate as a fertile source of pleasures, viz., to other men, being a very frequent cause of good acts, though needing, by perpetual watchfulness, to be kept obedient to the moral principle, in order that, by seeking to do good to one or a few, they may not produce a preponderance of evil to others; in fact, that one of these affections may not be gratified by the violation of another; more especially, that benevolence, the generical affection, may not be violated, in obedience to the impulse of some one of inferior importance.

Yet the man, who got a reputation under the name of Mackintosh, could give it to the world, that Mr. Mill had nothing more to say about benevolence, than that it produced a return of benevolence; though that is no trifle; and is deserving of more respect, if Sir James knew all, than seems to be implied in his exclamation, "how unimportant."

This pleasure of benevolence, which Mr. Mill expounded fully, both as to what it is, and what it does, but which, Sir James says, he passed over in silence, would, "if it could become lasting and intense," that is, if it could become a very pleasurable state of mind, for that is the meaning of

a pleasure lasting and intense, would be a very pleasurable state of mind; for that is the only meaning which can be annexed to the macaroni phrase, "a heart converted into a heaven." And because benevolence, if it could become a very pleasurable state of mind, would be a very pleasurable state of mind, therefore the followers of Mr. Bentham have dwelt so exclusively on the outward advantages of virtue, that is, the consequences of their acts, as to have lost sight of the delight which is a part of virtuous feeling. How attention to the consequences of acts is inconsistent with attention to the delight of the social affection, Sir James should have explained to us; and has not.

Sir James's next words are these. "No one who has ever felt kindness, if he could accurately recall his feelings" (he must be a strange fellow who cannot recall his feelings when he felt kindness) "could hesitate about their infinite superiority." Superiority? To what? The thing which Sir James was speaking about was the fact adverted to by Mr. Mill, that benevolence in one man towards other men, is a cause of benevolence in them towards him. But when Sir James says that the feelings a man has when he is kind, *i. e.* when he is benevolent, are superior to the return of benevolence, what is it he means? That it is more pleasing to love other men, than to be loved by them? This, at any rate, may be

doubted; and therefore there can be no great superiority; still less that "*infinite* superiority" Sir James is pleased to tell us of. This being silly, let us suppose Sir James to mean, that the pleasure of good will to other men is infinitely superior to all the pleasure derived from all the good which men can receive at the hands of other men in consequence of their benevolence. Every body knows that this is untrue. If it is Sir James's opinion that of all the good which exists in the world, the proportion which proceeds from this source, the reciprocation of kindness, is not very great, he is too ignorant to be talked to upon any thing which concerns the moral condition of mankind.

But besides all this, where is the good of bringing the pleasure of having good will toward other men into comparison, either with the delight of being the object of their good will, or that of being the object of their good acts, the effect of their good will; or of bringing collectively the good of having the pleasurable feeling of good will into comparison with the collective good of the acts of beneficence of which the benevolence kindled in one man by the benevolence of another is the productive cause?

The value to mankind of having the feeling of benevolence, is one thing; the value to them of the good things which spring from benevolence as effects, is another. The first value is

not lessened, by the magnitude of the second. The sum of the ingredients of happiness is only so much the greater. And there is yet another question, which comes nearer home to that of Sir James's competency to the task he has undertaken; what connection has the tawdry talk of Sir James, about the delight of the social affections, with the two questions, the solution of which, according to himself, completes the science of morals?

The first of these questions is,—What is morality?

The second is,—What is the approbation of morality, or the feeling we have when we contemplate virtuous acts?

1. Sir James does not mean to say, that the "delight" he speaks of, is the "morality" of an act. He does not probably mean to say that any of the social affections, though he calls them, not very aptly, virtuous feeling, is the morality of the act to which it may have given birth; because they may all give birth to immoral acts. To tell us, that the social affections are delightful; and to call upon all those who touch upon moral questions, to bawl loudly about the delight of them; and to treat it as infinitely superior in value to all the good acts which grow from reciprocation of benevolence, is not to tell us what morality is.

2. As little certainly do we derive any informa-

tion about the nature of that sentiment with which we contemplate a moral act, and which we denominate moral approbation, from eulogiums, however hyperbolical, on the pleasure of the social affections. The social affection is not the moral approbation. The social affection, when it has any thing to do with an act, has it in the way of cause; it gives birth to the motive. That is, it precedes the act; but the moral approbation follows it. Besides, if the social affection were both the morality of the act, and also the approbation of it, there would be that very confusion of the quality of the act, with the sentiment with which it is regarded, which Sir James so ridiculously ascribed to Bentham, Paley, and Leibnitz.

The next sentence we have from Sir James is a first-rate curiosity. "The cause of the general neglect of this consideration is, that it is only when a gratification is something distinct from a state of mind, that we can easily learn to consider it as a pleasure."

"This consideration" is that which was spoken of in the preceding sentence, to wit, the infinite superiority of the feelings a man has when he feels kindness. Sir James complains that these feelings have been neglected, and he says he will tell us the reason of it. The cause is, that they are states of mind. Had it been otherwise, had they not been states of mind, the delight of them would have been known, and attended to; would

at least have had a better chance of being so. "For," says Sir James, "it is only when a gratification" (alluding to that delight) "is something distinct from a state of mind, that," &c. Now, reader, do but settle with yourself, what the man could have known about the mind, who talked of a "gratification," as "something distinct from a state of mind." Why, a gratification is a state of mind; if not a state of mind, it is nothing. The word gratification is a name given to a state of the mind; a pleasurable state. A gratification, therefore, distinct from a state of mind, is a gratification distinct from itself; in other words, not itself; in other words, nothing.

Now then observe, what Sir James says next. He says, "We cannot easily learn to consider a gratification as a pleasure," that is, a gratification as a gratification, or a pleasure as a pleasure (very hard!) unless under a condition, and that assuredly a miraculous one, that the gratification shall be distinct from a state of mind.

It is very disgusting to follow such a man as this through his labyrinth of jargon. It is, however, useful; both for the exposure of such a case of imposture; and as a practical lesson to the young; to whom nothing is of more importance than the art of detecting want of meaning, or foolish meaning, or bad meaning, under foggy expressions.

Take his next sentence. "Hence the great

error respecting the affections, where the *inherent* delight is not duly estimated, on account of that very peculiarity of being a part of a state of mind, which renders it unspeakably more valuable as independent of every thing without." I wish the reader would here ask himself what he understands by these words.

" Hence," says Sir James, that is, from what he said in the preceding sentence, that a gratification is not easily found to be a gratification, unless in the case in which it is no gratification; from this he says, proceeds " the great error respecting the affections." An amusing origin, it must be confessed.

His next word is " where;" equivalent to *in which*, and may have for its antecedent, either " great error," or " affection," but is improperly used in either case. " An error" *where* something is not duly estimated, is not English. And " affections" *where* the inherent delight is so and so, is an expression equally absurd.

But passing by particles and connectives, let us come to the predication. " The inherent delight is not duly estimated, on account of that very peculiarity of being a part of a state of mind." But why should its being a part of a state of mind hinder its being duly estimated? Sir James does not tell us why. And I do not expect to meet with any body else who will do it for him. And what does Sir James mean by a delight's

being a part of a state of mind? Does he imagine that a state of mind exists by parts? This is the same ignorance we had before, when delight was spoken of as a part of feeling; as if delight was any thing but a name for a delightful feeling, that is, a delightful state of mind.

"Which renders it unspeakably more valuable as independent of every thing without."

Here Sir James tells us three things,—1st. That the delight of the affections is independent of every thing without; 2ndly. That it is thereby unspeakably more valuable; 3rdly. That it has this independence by being part of a state of mind.

What Sir James means by "independent of every thing without," we have to guess. He says, it is a quality unspeakably valuable. He also says it belongs to every state of mind, or part of a state, since it is in right of its being such a part, that a delight has it. In that case, the whole man is independent of every thing without. The feelings of the living man make up his being; and these feelings, from the highest exertions of intellect, and the noblest designs of benevolence, down to sensations, are all states of mind. Every thing, therefore, which man has is of unspeakable value. And hence he must be an unspeakably happy being.

I incline to think that what here Sir James was blundering about, was some vague recollection of the boast of the ancient Stoics, that they

had their virtue in their own hands, for it depended on their inward purposes, and not on any thing without. But the Stoics never said that a man's delights did not depend on any thing without.

Are the social affections independent of every thing without, when they are caused by something without, and have for their objects nothing but what is without; that is, have both their beginning and their end in what is without?

There is more of Sir James on the delight of the affections, equal in value to what I have pointed out; but I find it intolerable to take up every sentence, and shall pass to what he calls "the other virtuous dispositions." He says, the delight of having them, too, is a very great delight; and he takes for one instance the courageous disposition. He says its use in protecting its owner from danger is of far less value to him than the consciousness of possessing it. But from what did Sir James imagine does the pleasure of this consciousness arise? Men are generally not much pleased in the consciousness of possessing something which is of no use to them. The pleasing consciousness of a possession is the association with the idea of it, of the idea of all the advantages which may result from it. Sir James alludes to the advantages to others, which a man of courage may contemplate, as among the fruits of his bravery; the defence, for

example, of "a righteous cause." Undoubtedly; such ideas contribute powerfully to constitute his pleasing consciousness. Information from Sir James to this effect was little called for, since the fact is neither strange nor disputed. We have already seen how fully they are shewn by Mr. Mill to be included in the associations which regard the virtue of courage.

Sir James, after informing us that, in the pleasing consciousness of possessing courage, more is included than the mere thought of the good effects immediately regarding the man himself, proceeds to tell us that the same is the case with *humility*; very unnecessarily; for there is nobody who will dispute that it is the case with every virtuous disposition. The consciousness of possessing it is a pleasurable state of mind, made up of the thought of all the good consequences, of which it is naturally the cause. Humility, however, seems to be mentioned for the sake of introducing the perversion of a passage in the work of Mr. Mill, and thereupon building a condemnation of the author.

"*Humility* has of late been unwarrantably used to signify that painful consciousness of inferiority which is the first stage of envy." And for this "unwarrantable use," the reference is, "Mill's Analysis of the Human Mind, vol. ii. p. 222." He does not favour us with any statement of the grounds of this charge; other than this bare

reference in a note at the bottom of the page. We are therefore obliged to look at the passage in the book.

In referring to a passage in this work, which is a course of analysis, proceeding from the most simple, to the most complicated phenomena of the human mind, there is frequently this disadvantage, that a preceding part of the analysis must be taken into view, to ascertain the import of that which is the immediate object of attention. Such is the case, at present.

One grand class of the cases which Mr. Mill had to analyze, was the union formed by association of the ideas of our pleasures and pains, with the ideas of the causes of them. The causes of our pleasures and pains he found it convenient to his analysis to consider as of two kinds—1, the immediate causes; 2, the remote.

Having examined the associations formed with the immediate causes, and the affections they constitute, he proceeds to the consideration of those formed with the remote causes, and commences thus:—

"As among the remote causes of our pleasures and pains may be reckoned every thing which in any way contributes to them, it follows that the number of such causes is exceedingly great. Of course it is only the principal cases which have been alluded to, and classed under titles. They are the following;—wealth, power, dignity, as

regards the pleasurable sensations; poverty, impotence, contemptibility, as regards the painful."

Mr. Mill then expounds at length, the states of mind which are formed by association of the ideas of these remote causes with the ideas of the pleasures and pains which they are calculated to produce, noticing the names which, as affections, they have received; and afterwards remarks this important fact, that these states of mind undergo considerable modification, when the different degrees are contemplated in which those important causes appertain to different persons. This passage is of importance for exhibiting the perversion which Sir James presents to his reader of the sense of Mr. Mill.

"It is to be observed," says Mr. Mill, "that wealth, power, and dignity, derive a great portion of their efficacy, from their *comparative* amount; that is, from their being possessed by an individual in greater quantity than by most other people. In contemplating them with the satisfaction with which powerful causes of pleasure are contemplated, we seldom fail to include the comparison. And the state of consciousness formed by the contemplation and comparison taken together is called *Pride.*

"We are said to be proud of our wealth, proud of our power, proud of our dignity; and also of any of the ingredients of which our power or dignity is composed, of our knowledge, of our

eloquence, of our family, of our personal beauty, &c.

"It is obvious that, in the contemplation of our own wealth, power, and dignity, as greater, we include the contemplation of another man's as less. As the state of consciousness thus formed, when the reference is to ourselves, is called pride, it is called contempt, when the reference is to others. When the case is reversed, that is, when a man contemplates his wealth, power, and dignity, as less than those of other men, the state of consciousness is called *Humility*."

Such is Mr. Mill's account of humility. It is unquestionably a term of comparison; just as pride is,—its counterpart. No man is humble because he thinks himself greater than another man, but because he thinks himself less, in some respect which he deems of importance. The word has many shades of meaning, in common parlance; but this is its generical import.

This contemplation of a man's self as inferior, is not a pleasing state of consciousness, and incites to such actions as may remove the inferiority. This inferiority may be removed by actions of two sorts; either, actions tending to pull down the man who is superior, or actions tending to raise the person himself who feels the inferiority. When he is incited to acts of the latter sort, his state of mind is applauded; it is called honourable emulation, laudable ambition, and so on. When he is incited to acts of the former sort, his

state of mind is abhorred, and is called envy, one of the most dishonouring of terms.

It is cruel that Sir James's ignorance, and evil disposition, should force us upon these tedious explanations. But now at last we shall be enabled to see to the bottom of his imputation.

"*Humility*," he says, "has of late been unwarrantably used to signify that painful consciousness of inferiority, which is the first stage of envy."

By this he plainly imputes to Mr. Mill an intention to disparage the virtue of humility, as tending to nothing but envy. Is there any truth in this representation? The answer may be safely left to the reader.

What Mr. Mill has said of humility, according to Sir James, is this, and this only, that it is the first stage of envy. With exactly the same propriety might he be accused of saying, that shame is the first stage of murder. Shame has nothing to do with murder, though an ill-directed mind may have recourse to murder as a means of escaping from shame. Humility has as little to do with envy, though an ill-directed mind may take wrong methods to relieve the painful feeling of inferiority.

Sir James was utterly ignorant of the relation in which an affection stands to a motive and a motive to a disposition, though this is one of the most useful portions of that analysis which Mr. Mill has effected.

The reference in support of Sir James's perver-

sion is to what Mr. Mill says of humility in his chapter of *Motives*. He imposes upon us the necessity of reciting the passage.

"We have seen that the value of wealth, power, and dignity, is greatly enhanced by their comparative amount; that is, the degree in which they are possessed by us compared with the degree in which they are possessed by others.

"We have seen in what manner this comparison generates certain *affections*, which have received the names of pride, on the one hand, contempt on the other; humility on the one hand, respect, admiration, on the other. We have now to shew in what manner this comparison generates both *motives*, and *dispositions*.

"As it is not only of value to me to have wealth, power, and dignity, but to have more than other men, the surpassing of other men thus becomes a cause of pleasure; and hence the idea of this surpassing associated with the idea of acts of mine as its cause becomes a *motive*.

"We may endeavour to surpass other men by either of two ways; by adding to our own wealth, power, dignity; or by abstracting from theirs. When only ideas of the acts which add to our advantages enter into the motive, it is called *emulation*. When ideas of the acts which abstract from theirs enter into it, it is called *envy*."

Having said so much of the *motives* which may arise from this comparison, part urging in the

right, part in the wrong direction, with the names given to them respectively, he proceeds to speak of the corresponding *dispositions*, and the names given to them. "Emulation," he says, "is sometimes the name of the *disposition*, as well as that of the motive," viz. the motive which urges in the right direction: but he adds that ambition is the more frequent name of this disposition. He then turns to the motive which operates in the wrong direction, and says, "Envy is the name both of the *disposition* and the *motive*. It has the appearance also of being the name of the corresponding *affection*, or state of consciousness arising from the comparison of another man's greater, with our own less advantages." Mr. Mill says, that this however is not the case. When the state of consciousness is merely comparison, and has not yet been converted into a motive to act, either in the right direction or the wrong, it has, as he had said before, the name of *humility*. "It is never envy but when the motive to act in the wrong direction is felt;" just as it is emulation, ambition, when the motive to act in the right direction is felt. Of these two dispositions, the disposition corresponding to the motive which urges in the right direction, and the motive which urges in the wrong, Mr. Mill speaks generally thus: "The same end is attainable by two sets of means, the one virtuous, the other vicious. The man who

takes the virtuous course is the man who has formed the *habit* of associating his desire of surpassing others with the acts which increase his own advantages. The man who takes the vicious course is the man who has formed the habit of associating with his idea of the benefit of surpassing others the ideas of the acts by which their advantages are diminished. This is a case," adds Mr. Mill, "of the greatest importance in education, and ethics."

Is it possible to find an attempt to put a wrong and odious construction upon a man's words, with intention, not only without, but in defiance of evidence, more flagrant than that which is displayed in Sir James's declaration, "Humility has been unwarrantably used by Mr. Mill to signify that painful consciousness of inferiority, which is the first stage of envy?"

Sir James, then, in prosecution of his ambition of speaking loudly about the delight of social affections, and "other virtuous dispositions," and of the superior value of this delight to all the difference between the consequences of good actions and bad, goes on to talk of the "delight" of humility. In the sentimental song, sung by Sir James on this occasion, there is enough of what it would be good to expose. He confounds humility with other virtues; the correct estimate, for example, of a man's self. He talks nonsense; as when he says that "humility soothes and com-

poses vanity, and pride;" as if the presence of humility were not another name for the absence of vanity and pride. Vanity and pride do not remain to be soothed by humility; they are gone when humility comes. The word humility is the negation of pride and vanity. But as there is hardly a sentence of Sir James which does not present a demand for exposure, it is impossible to do more than give samples of this philosopher.

After having spent so many words in praising the delight, Sir James comes to philosophise upon it; and thus he performs:—

"Virtue has often outward advantages, and always inward delights; but the second, though constant, strong, inaccessible, and inviolable, are not easily considered by the common observer as apart from the virtue with which they are blended. They are so subtle and evanescent as to escape the distinct contemplation of all but the very few who meditate on the acts of mind. The outward advantages, on the other hand, cold, uncertain, dependent, and precarious as they are, yet stand out to the sense and memory, may be handled and counted, and are perfectly on a level with the general apprehension. Hence they have become the almost exclusive theme of all the moralists who profess to follow reason."

The having certain feelings of a delightful nature, antecedent to action, and independent of it, and the consequences which flow from good

acts, are here placed in counterview; and the feelings are represented as of far greater importance than the acts.

In the next place, we are let to know, that it is a very difficult thing, to distinguish the feelings; and except to "the very few who meditate on the acts of mind," they are unknown, or something very near it. One would imagine that a feeling, which is very delightful, would be one of the last things to be unknown to the man that felt it.

I think it necessary to fix the attention of the reader, for a little time, on this curious doctrine.

It has been frequently mentioned with regret, that sentimental novels, and other sentimental breathings, have a pernicious effect upon the morals of those who are addicted to them, especially the young, by encouraging in them a notion, that those who have the fine feelings are the fine people; and that having the fine feelings they may concern themselves but moderately about acts. Sir James, assuredly, is the first who has undertaken to erect this sort of thinking into a philosophical creed, and to preach formally the doctrine that moral acts go a very little way to constitute the moral man; that moral feeling is the great thing, moral acting a matter of inferior consideration.

As Sir James is the first who has set up this system, I venture to predict that he will be alone of his school. No man hereafter will dare to

write moral philosophy, so utterly unqualified for the task as Sir James.

After the intensity of Sir James's "delights," we come to the incognoscibility of them. He says, "though constant, strong, inaccessible, and inviolable, they are not easily considered by the common observer as apart from the virtue with which they are blended." If we could, we would get an answer, from somebody, to the question what Sir James meant by the "inaccessibility" of a delight; or its "inviolability." A violated delight, I should think it not easy to find.

Sir James says, the fault of the common observer is that he does not consider these delights, "constant, strong, inaccessible, and inviolable" though they be, "as apart from the virtue with which they are blended." They are not, then, the virtue. They are something separate from it; and it is a failure in perspicacity, not to distinguish them.

But then it is necessary to inquire, what "the virtue" is, which they are not, but with which they are blended.

Beside the sentiment, Sir James's "delight," which may be regarded as cause of the act, there is nothing in the case connected with virtue but the act itself, and the consequences of it. The act, then, and the consequences, are all that remain, apart from the delight, to make the virtue out of. And what Sir James tells us is this—that

the delight is far superior in importance to the virtue. This moralist does honour to those who enabled him to live in the delights of fame. Mr. Peter Pounce was his predecessor; who, in a discussion with Parson Adams, established the superior merit of good feelings over good acts; which, or the consequences of which, Sir James treats as "cold, uncertain, dependent, and precarious." "Sir, said Adams, my definition of charity is a generous disposition to relieve the distressed. There is something in that definition, answered Peter, which I like well enough; it is, as you say, a disposition; and does not so much consist in the act as in the disposition to do it."

There are two things, then, the "delight," and "the virtue," which Sir James says it is difficult to consider as separate. The virtue, as we have seen, is in the act and its consequences. Now we may safely affirm, that no man ever found the least difficulty in considering the feeling, by which he is inclined to a good act, as distinct from the act itself, and its consequences; there never was either man or woman who did not distinguish them. When a poor servant girl, without a halfpenny in her pocket, says to her companion, "that woman and child seem to be starving; I wish to God, I had some halfpence to give them;" does she not know that the pity she feels is one thing, the act of giving the halfpence, if she had them, and the pleasure of the

starving wretches in eating the bread which the halfpence would purchase, another thing?

Sir James says, his "delights" are "subtle, evanescent." What is it that he means here to denote by the word "subtle?" In its primary use, it would seem to have denoted corporeal thinness, exility of parts. But if this is applied figuratively to a pleasure, which is neither dense nor rare, it would seem to express only weakness; a slender pleasure is a weak pleasure. "Evanescent," he also calls his "delights." And "evanescent" means something, so faint as barely to exist, or barely to be seen; just about to become non-existent, or imperceptible.

Sir James had got into an intellectual state so thoroughly depraved, that I doubt whether a parallel to it is possible to be found. He seems to have become utterly regardless of, perhaps incapable of regarding, what he said. He had but two lines before told us, with equal emphasis, that his "delights" were "strong," "constant." He now tells us that they are "subtle," "evanescent," which seems to be precisely the negation of the former qualities.

He also tells us, that they are blended with the virtue, and all this to explain to us how that happens, which does not happen, that they are by most observers confounded with the virtue.

The virtue, as we have seen, is in the act, and its consequences. How can delight, which is a

feeling in the mind, be blended with an act, which is something without the mind; and with the consequences of the act, which are something posterior to the act? To assert, however, an impossibility, is not more difficult to Sir James, than to assert as a matter of fact, that which had no existence, and against the existence of which he had before him incontrovertible evidence.

Some one may take up the defence of Sir James, and say, that though the delight, which is in the mind, cannot be blended with the act and its consequences, which are not in the mind, it may very naturally and easily be blended with the ideas of the act and its consequences. But such a defender has to be informed, that his memory is short. Sir James has debarred himself of this resource. This is what he abuses Mr. Bentham for. To teach men to have in their minds, before acting, the ideas of the consequences of their acts, is to tell them, he says, to set the principle of utility always before them; a recommendation which he treats with ineffable contempt. The defender is, indeed, right in his remark, though mistaken in his attempt to use it in defence of Sir James. It is true that the pleasurable feeling which first prompts to the act does call up ideas of the act and its consequences; and just as these consequences are upon the whole beneficial, that is, in proportion as the ideas of them are pleasurable

ideas, is the original impulse rendered more and more highly pleasurable: in other words, and to state the conclusion more generally; the mental delight which is connected with virtuous acting, becomes more and more intense, in proportion exactly as the principle of utility is more fully and correctly brought into play. This most important class of associations has been analysed carefully by Mr. Mill, and may be understood by any man who reads his book; if he does but read with the attention which the nature of his subject requires.

Sir James does not think that he has sufficiently exalted the feelings, till he has also degraded the acting. The "outward advantages of virtue," (which we have shewn can be nothing else but acts and their consequences) he says, are "cold, uncertain, dependent, and precarious, can be handled and counted," and so on.—This is Sir James's practical morality.—The mere fondness a man has for his child, the delight which an idiot is capable of having in the highest possible degree, which we are not sure that the lower animals have not in the highest degree, is to be considered of greater value, than the outward advantages of parental virtue, the man's hard and persevering labours to supply the wants of his child, his perpetual study of its future happiness, the care with which he watches its inward movements, and endeavours to impart to it those

habits which are best calculated to render its life a source of happiness to itself and others.

Every body knows, that in the mind of the virtuous parent, the anticipation of these consequences, "outward advantages" though they be, "cold," capable of being "counted," and so on, is the supreme delight; that which cheers him in his long and tedious labours, and strengthens him to persevere in his virtuous though painful course. Sir James is too ignorant to see that in his gabble about the inward delights and the outward advantages, he excludes those joyous hopes from the parental affection, because they rest only on the "outward advantages," which are insignificant as motives, so says Sir James, "infinitely inferior," these are his very words, to the "inward delight," and which most people he says commit a great mistake in not separating from the "inward delight," which ought always to be considered as "apart" from them.

Sir James having said, that the outward advantages, obvious to the senses, have been more taken notice of by the vulgar, than the inward delights, goes on; "there is room for suspecting that a very general illusion prevails on this subject. Probably the smallest part of the pleasure of virtue, because it is the most palpable, has become the sign and mental representative of the whole. The outward and visible sign

suggests insensibly the inward and mental delight."

That delight which fills the breast of a virtuous father when he looks forward to the consequences of what he has done for his child, in the wise and beneficent conduct of the full grown man, the object of the respect and affection of all who know him, Sir James has the fatuity to tell us, is the smallest part of the pleasure which the father has in his parental virtue. Yet after this is deducted, what is it which remains? Only that animal fondness, which the worst of men share perhaps in equal degree with the best, and which is enjoyed, and in perhaps not a lower degree, by the inferior animals. The whole of the delightful anticipations which spring from virtuous acting, the view of the extensive and never ending trains of beneficial consequences which spring from certain kinds of acting to myriads of men from generation to generation, are "perhaps," says Sir James, "the smallest part of the pleasure of virtue."

Such is the result of Sir James's elaborate endeavour to put the pleasure of feeling above that of acting. The idea of all the consequences, how great and glorious soever, of a course of wise and beneficial action, serves only to "suggest insensibly the inward and mental delight;" that delight which is of little value, except as it produces those "outward advantages," which Sir

James speaks of with a kind of distaste, and reproaches Mr. Bentham and others for too strenuously calling upon men to regard.

Sir James is perpetually presenting a call for verbal criticism. Here is an instance. Every body understands the fact, that an inward delight is often suggested by an outward object. But how an inward delight can be suggested "insensibly," it would have puzzled Sir James to explain. It seems to mean suggested without being suggested; felt insensibly, is felt without being felt.

Upon this exposition of the superiority of the inward delight to the outward advantages, Sir James hooks, (the Lord knows how,) a dissertation upon the love of fame. "Much of our love of praise," he says, "may be *thus* ascribed to humane and sociable pleasure in the sympathy of others with us. Praise is the symbol which represents sympathy, and which the mind insensibly substitutes for it in recollection and in language."

Sir James says we have a pleasure in sympathy (his "humane and sociable" are here wholly without meaning); praise is the representative of this pleasure; and therefore we love praise. Upon this shewing, the man who is most fond of sympathy, must be the man who is most fond of praise. But it is a common remark, that they who are most fond of praise, are not the most

careful to deserve it. On the other hand, the greatest benefactors of mankind have frequently been distinguished for contempt of praise. These phenomena needed explanation at the hand of Sir James. Where is it?

The idea of the favourable opinion of our fellow creatures as cause, is associated with the idea of a great portion of our most valuable pleasures, as effects. Praise, in its true nature, is the expression of a favourable opinion. But who needed Sir James to tell him, in new, and hardly intelligible phrase, that he loves the good opinion of mankind, and therefore loves to be told of it?

Having told us why we love present praise, Sir James proceeds to account for the love of posthumous fame. He says we love that also as the representative of sympathy. And he breaks out into a rhapsody in praise of this same love, which explains nothing. The phraseology I recommend to the reader's own attention; but some of the things I must not pass unnoticed. It would have been impossible for Sir James, had he asked himself what he meant, not to have remembered (for he had a memory) hundreds of instances of men seeking posthumous fame without either morality or genius.

Sir James, consistently with his perfect ignorance of the subject, exults in the proof, which he says the love of posthumous praise

affords, of his favourite philosophy, that man has "disinterested desires." Yet he allows that the love of posthumous praise is wholly grounded on the desire of present praise, which surely he would not have had the face to say is disinterested.

Having changed the name, viz. love of praise, to "regard for character," he says, "men infuse into that word a large portion of that sense in which it denotes the frame of the mind." The word character has two meanings; in one sense it is synonymous with reputation, in another it means the actual qualities of the mind. In the phrase "regard for character," it has the first meaning. Regard for character is regard for reputation. When we say of a man, that he is a noble character, it has the second meaning; we affirm that he has noble qualities of mind. What Sir James then says, is, that when a man speaks of regard for his character in its sense of reputation, he infuses into this meaning a great portion of the other meaning. But could not Sir James have expressed this in the language of a Christian, and have said at once, that the desire of being thought to have good qualities is not always separate from the desire of possessing them? Who is ignorant of this? And where is the use of giving us such truisms in an almost unintelligible jargon?

He passes from the word "character," to the

word "honor," and speaks of it as admitting of a similar "infusion;" the infusion of its meaning when it signifies some one's possession of good qualities, into its meaning when it signifies other men's belief in that possession. The good qualities, or quality, which it denotes, when it signifies the qualities, and not the reputation of them, is a certain minute attention, says Sir James, to small wrongs.

But no body needs to be told, that there ought to be no wrongs, either great or small, and that if two men are equally attentive to avoid great wrongs, but one of them more attentive to avoid small wrongs than the other, he is the better man of the two. This is such stuff as would not find its way into a pulpit exercise.

If, however, Sir James's minute attention to small wrongs, means, not a minute attention to avoid them, in one's conduct towards others; but a minute attention to resent them, in others, towards oneself, it is a vice, not a virtue. Is not Sir James an accurate writer, using words which leave it doubtful which of these two things he means to express?

Sir James then breaks out, and somewhat abruptly, into a rhapsodical eulogy of the man who prefers the true merit to the lying report of it. The meaning, here, is trite, even to puerility, but the wording is curious. "What heart does not warm at the noble exclamation of the ancient

poet: 'Who is pleased by false honour, or frightened by lying infamy, but he who is false and depraved?'" There is not much to warm a heart in being told that a paltry fellow is a paltry fellow. But if it be so despicable to be pleased with undeserved praise, what is it to be the bestower of it? "Every uncorrupted mind," says Sir James, "feels unmerited praise as a bitter reproach." Sir James must have rarely met with these "uncorrupted minds;" for he was one of the boldest hands of his day at the unmerited praise, and I do not believe he ever, in any one instance, found it treated as a reproach.

Sir James goes on: "Every uncorrupted mind regards a consciousness of demerit as a drop of poison in the cup of honour." A consciousness of demerit is certainly not a comfortable feeling; it is however a consciousness which most men are very clever in escaping. Whatever their want of merits, they mostly contrive to keep on good terms with themselves.

But what has a consciousness of demerit to do in the cup of honour? Honour means merit. Demerit is therefore the negation of it. If honour here only means the praise of honourableness, the man who does not deserve it is a despicable person, if he has pleasure in receiving it. But this is precisely what he told us before, without his "cup," and his "drop." Observe that the "cup of honour," in this beautiful

metaphor, means undeserved reputation, and the knowledge that it is undeserved is a drop of poison in it. This cup would have been a salutary draught, it seems, except for the knowledge, but that makes it poisonous. Undeserved praise, when a man knows not that it is undeserved, is no bad cup; when he does know, a drop of poison is in it.

Sir James having thus supported his charge against Mr. Bentham, and those whom he classes with him, that they did not set the "inward delight" far above the "outward advantages;" that is, fine feeling above virtuous acting, comes now to the second count in his indictment, that they overlooked entirely the effect of virtuous acting upon the mind.

I do not think it was possible even for Sir James, though his daring in this particular is not easily matched, to have made an affirmation so utterly at variance with evidence, had he known what was in the works of Mr. Bentham and Mr. Mill; because he could not have hoped to escape detection and disgrace. And Sir James's ignorance of the books he criticizes is so far from being a difficult supposition, that the fact is manifest in almost every page of his work.

The accusation against Mr. Mill, that he entirely overlooked the effect on the mind produced by acting; the man who first had expounded that effect successfully, by shewing that

affections are associations formed of the ideas of pleasures and the causes of them; that the associations formed of the ideas of pleasures or the causes of them and of an act of our own as cause of either, are *motives;* and that a facility of forming this last association, to be acquired solely by repetition, that is, frequent obedience to the motive, that is, frequent acting, is *disposition*— is something so outrageous, that ordinary disregard of the distinction between truth and falsehood will not account for it.

Sir James seems to have thought of nothing but a mysterious jargon; and when he had compassed that, and could work it for praise or blame in any quarter, as he listed, *alias* lusted, to have felt satisfied with himself, as a man in the full enjoyment of his object. It seems never to have crossed his brain, that what he was charging against these writers, in the wonderful language we shall afterwards hear, is only this, that they were ignorant of that of which nobody is ignorant, the power of habit; or, at least, did not think habits of obeying the motives to virtuous acting, that is, *dispositions,* as expounded by Mr. Mill, a matter of importance. If this accusation had been true, every body sees what a deep condemnation it would have inferred. When it is utterly untrue, and against glaring evidence, what does it infer against the man who brought it?

Sir James begins:—"They who have most inculcated the doctrine of utility have given another notable example of the very vulgar prejudice which treats the unseen as insignificant." "The unseen" here means the habits acquired by repetition of virtuous acts. He accuses "those who have most inculcated the doctrine of utility," of treating good habits ("the unseen") as "insignificant;" and he calls this a case of a vulgar prejudice. On the contrary, the vulgar are remarkable for making too much of the "unseen;" witness their ideas of ghosts, devils, and so on. At all events, there is no man so vulgar as to overlook the power of habit.

Sir James proceeds:—"Tucker is the only one of them who occasionally considers that most important effect of human conduct which consists in its action on the frame of the mind, by fitting its faculties and sensibilities for their appointed purpose." This is the Sir-Jamesical mode of saying, that frequent acting produces habit. Observe the words, and how they stand. He says, that "the action of human conduct fits the faculties and sensibilities of the mind for their appointed purpose;" that is, gives good habits. Sir James never reflected, that there are many modes of human conduct which give bad habits, and not good. Sir James, then, meant good conduct, and did not know how to express himself.

Sir James says, "the action of human conduct

on the mind," that is, the effect of it; when one thing acts on another, it means that it has effect on it. Sir James's affirmation, then, is, "that the effect of human conduct on the frame of the mind consists in" its effect on it.—Sir James calls good habits "faculties and sensibilities of mind fitted for their appointed purpose." This is profound instruction. Are his faculties, and sensibilities, the same, or different? And if different, wherein do they differ? Sir James is silent. One faculty of the mind is dreaming. How is that "fitted to its purpose" by "that most important effect of human conduct which consists in its effect on the frame of the mind, by fitting its faculties and sensibilities to their purpose?" The fear of ghosts is one of the sensibilities of the mind, and the smell of a rose is another. How are these fitted to their purpose by the action of human conduct on the mind? This is very needless work, as regards the subject. But the exposure of a successful pretender, of this kind, is not needless.

Sir James goes on illustrating the importance of forming good habits, in a manner truly his own. "A razor or a penknife would well enough cut cloth, or meat; but if they were often so used they would be entirely spoiled." Reader, this gives you real insight (does it not), into the formation and use of good habits. "The same sort of observation" (the same as that about the

razor) "is much more strongly applicable to habitual dispositions" (a disposition, though Sir James did not know so much, is a habit, habitual disposition, therefore, is habitual habit, that is, simply habit), "which if they be spoiled, we have no certain means of replacing or mending."

Nobody needed the razor and the penknife, cutting cloth and meat, to make him comprehend the evil of losing good habits. There is not a tailor's wife who does not inculcate this upon her child. Losing a good habit, Sir James calls "spoiling," by his usual infelicity of expression. A good habit may be lost, and a bad one may be acquired in its stead; but spoiling a habit is nonsense. And when spoiled he says, "we have no certain means of replacing or mending it." Had Sir James ever reflected at all he could not but have known, that there are certain means of recovering good habits which have been lost, as well as of correcting bad ones, which have been acquired. Is any thing more common, even in the mouths of the common people, than the expostulation to one another, why do you not break yourself of that bad habit?

Sir James invents another phrase, to tell us once more, as if we did not know it already, that the loss of a good habit is the loss of a very good thing. "Whatever act, therefore, discomposes the moral machinery of mind" (what a name for good habits!) "is more injurious to the welfare

of the agent," &c. Granted. The loss of good habits, if it extends to any considerable number, is the greatest of misfortunes; and every body knows it. But Sir James shews great ignorance, when he speaks of a single act, as breaking up a habit. Habits are lost, as they are acquired, only by repetition.

Sir James has a new invented phraseology also, to tell us that a set of good habits is a very good thing. "Health of mind" (that is the name for the set) "is not only productive in itself of a greater sum of enjoyments than arises from other sources; but is the only condition of our frame in which we are capable of receiving pleasures from without." This is as much as to tell us, that we have no pleasures, either from within or without, but what are derived from good habits.

It is remarkable, that a man could be found, ignorant that a habit never created a pleasure in its life. Good habits are those courses of action, by which the pleasures from nature's sources are in greatest abundance made ours.

It is not true that good habits are "the only condition of our frame in which we are capable of receiving pleasure from without." The very worst of men, who of course are the men most devoid of good habits, are susceptible of very intense pleasure both from without and within. The consequence of the want of good habits, in any man, is, that the sum of his enjoyments is

much less, and of his pains much greater, than otherwise it would have been.

Sir James could not, it should seem, prevail upon himself to come to a pause in his panegyric on good habits. He knew of a thing, which is not nearly so good as good habits, that is, "a present interest." He says, there are some people, meaning Mr. Bentham, and those whom in his bounty he gives him as followers, who were so foolish as not to know this; and foolish, in that case, they must indeed have been; for if good habits are the means of compassing the greatest sum of pleasures, to say that one pleasure, or source of pleasures, is equal to them, is only to say that the whole is not greater than one of its parts.

This is nonsense sufficiently pure; but we come to something next which I really think is better. "When they" (habits) "are most moral," that is, I suppose, when they are of a kind to produce the greatest sum of pleasures, "they may often prevent us from obtaining advantages;" undoubtedly, viz., by the sacrifice of the less to the greater, and not otherwise.

And "it would be absurd," Sir James says, "to desire to lower them for that reason." If by lowering a habit (a strange expression), Sir James meant, making it less perfect; to make a habit less perfect, because it gives us the greater pleasure, instead of the less; that is, to make it less

an instrument of good, he might well pronounce absurd, such an absurdity as human being never yet was guilty of.

Sir James, having thus advanced, and thus supported, his accusation against Mr. Bentham and those whom he associates with him, that they did not know the value of good habits, nor the mode of their formation, proceeds a step farther, and affirms, that they preach a doctrine which goes to the destruction of good habits.

"It is impossible," he says, "to combine the benefit of the general habit with the advantages of occasional deviation." And then he proceeds, in Sir Jamesical phrase, to prove to us this recondite proposition, that the way to weaken a habit, is to act contrary to it. Before, however, he comes to apply his charge to his intended victims, Sir James philosophizes a little. "The infirmity of recollection," he says, "aggravated by the defects of language, gives an appearance of more selfishness to man than truly belongs to his nature; and the effect of active agents upon the habitual state of mind, one of the considerations to which the epithet *sentimental* has of late been applied in derision, is really among the most serious and reasonable objects of moral philosophy."

Sir James's first observation is too profound for me; that because man's memory is not good, and his language an imperfect instrument, therefore

he appears more selfish than he is. First of all, as to the fact:—*Does* man appear more selfish than he is? I am afraid he much more frequently appears more benevolent than he is. But if there were such a delusion, how badness of memory, and imperfection of language, would account for it, I confess myself unable to understand. Nor does Sir James help me a whit by saying, it is manifest from what he had said before. What he had said before was, that an act in opposition to a good habit does great injury to the mind. But that has no bearing that I can see upon the question of the disinterestedness, or selfishness, of human nature.

His other penetrating observation is, that "the effect of active agents upon the habitual state of mind, is among the most serious and reasonable objects of moral philosophy." Now, first of all, we need to be told what "those active agents" here spoken of, which work upon the mind, are. Does he mean other men? Undoubtedly they are the grand class of agents which produce effects on each man's mind. But no human being ever doubted, that the mode in which the mind of man is acted on by his fellow creatures is among the most important objects of philosophical inquiry. And assuredly, no person ever applied the epithet *sentimental* to such inquiry, either in derision, or otherwise. Besides, what has such an observation to do with the subject our philo-

sopher is upon, viz., the effect produced upon each man's mind by his own act? Upon my life, I believe, incredible as it may seem, that Sir James's active agents are no other than the agent's own acts. A man acts; these acts, Sir James says, have effects on the man's mind; and thence he calls these acts "active agents."

We have seen that the effects, beyond the merely temporary effects, produced by a man's acts on his own mind, are habits. Now where is the use of telling us (in whatever prodigy of phrase) that habits are acquired, and also altered, by acting; and that the mode of their formation is an important topic in philosophy? Was this ever doubted? When Sir James says, that the consideration of men's acts as the cause of their habits, has been called *sentimental*, he speaks without book. This was never called sentimental in this world.

Sir James inserts here (for what purpose is not visible) a re-statement of his doctrine, that the fine feelings of the agent are of infinitely more importance than his acts. Sir James is never tired of inculcating that doctrine. And his words on this occasion deserve notice, because they are more explicit than ordinary. He says, "When the internal pleasures and pains which *accompany* good and bad feelings, or, rather, form a part of them, and the external advantages and disadvantages which follow good and bad actions,

are sufficiently considered, the comparative importance of outward consequences will be more and more narrowed." Good God! What a doctrine is this? Good actions, and all their effects, all the happiness which human beings derive from the good actions of one another; in fact, almost all the happiness which it is given to them to enjoy; is insignificant, compared with certain pleasurable states of mind antecedent to action. From this doctrine it follows, that if the feelings did but exist in perfection, it would be a matter of little or no importance, whether there were any good actions or not.—Observe on what, in his blindness, Sir James stumbles next. "So that the Stoical philosophy may be thought almost excusable for rejecting it altogether, were it not an indispensably necessary consideration for those in whom right habits of feeling are not sufficiently strong. They alone are happy, or even truly virtuous, who have little need of it." The meaning is, that if a man has "the right habits of feeling," he is truly virtuous and happy, whether he acts or does not act, and whether he acts so as to produce good or evil effects. I do not accuse him of meaning this. He had a mind incapable of knowing the import of what he said.

He cannot touch even upon the Stoical philosophy, without marring it. Does he suppose that the Stoics altogether rejected the importance of acts? if "rejecting importance" has any meaning.

Any man who knows English would have said, "denying the importance." The Stoics were so far from denying the importance of right acting, that they thought nothing else was important. The Stoics troubled themselves little with Sir James's delights, the companions or the parts (Sir James knows not which) of his feelings. They were remarkable for holding them in contempt. What they taught was this; that when a man acted with good intention, but was disappointed of the effects he intended, by circumstances over which he had no controul, the merit of his act was not lessened, nor the self-satisfaction he was entitled to entertain. To misrepresent such a doctrine in such a way is a sample of Sir James. This is his established mode of dealing with other men's doctrines.

Does it not seem incredible, that a man should have been found, who could not see, that all the value of acts consists in the consequences of the acts; that if the acts are detached from their consequences, they are unmeaning contractions of muscles, and had as well not be performed; and that if any being performs those contractions without a regard to the consequences, such a being ranks with mere animal nature?

Some of Sir James's phrases would need remark, if it were not intolerable to remark on every thing in a long train of absurdities. His talking of a feeling as one thing, and the pleasure of it

as another, has been already exposed. We shall advert to one more, "that the consideration of consequences is necessary for those in whom right habits of feeling are not sufficiently strong." Why is the consideration of consequences necessary to them? If consequences are of little importance, how can the consideration of them be of any, either to those who have, or those who have not, "right habits of feeling?" Again, how can right habits of feeling make the consideration of consequences of less importance? Are the consequences of a man's acts less important, in proportion as the man has more of the right habits of feeling? Once more; what does Sir James mean by "right habits of feeling?" Habits of right feeling is the proper expression. But what is right feeling, and what is wrong? A feeling, in itself, can neither be right, nor wrong. Its being a feeling is its whole essence, and its qualities are to be pleasurable, painful, or indifferent. If it prompts to good actions, it may, as cause of the action, get metaphorically the name of good, as in the opposite case that of evil. But acts are good or bad because of their consequences. Feelings, therefore, are good or bad, because of the consequences of the acts of which they are the cause. Yet observe the sagacity of Sir James. Good feelings, he says, render all regard to consequences unnecessary; though the feelings are good only in consequence of that

regard. Good feelings render that unnecessary, which *is* necessary; viz. to their own existence. How triumphantly Sir James establishes the badness of the ethical system of Mr. Bentham and Mr. Mill!

We now come to something which is of the nature of a recapitulation of Sir James's charges, with corollaries.

"The later moralists who adopt the principle of utility have so *misplaced* it" (the italics are Sir James's own) "that in their hands it has as great a tendency as any theoretical error can have to lessen the intrinsic pleasure of virtue, and to unfit our habitual feelings for being the most effectual inducements to good conduct. This is the natural tendency of a discipline which brings utility too closely and frequently into contact with action. By this habit, in its best state, an essentially weaker motive is gradually substituted for others which must always be of more force. The frequent appeal to utility as the standard of action tends to introduce an uncertainty with respect to the conduct of other men, which would render all intercourse insupportable. It affords also so fair a disguise for selfish and malignant passions, as often to hide their nature from him who is their prey. Some taint of these mean and evil principles will at least creep in, and by their venom give an animation not its own to the cold desire of utility. The moralists who

take an active part in these affairs which often call out unenviable passions, ought to guard with peculiar watchfulness against such self-delusions."

Now, then, for the sense of these accusatory phrases.

All but the last part is poor repetition. It is the same trash which we had at the beginning of Sir James's outpourings against the system of Mr. Bentham; that he required the principle of utility to be brought too constantly before us; "the radical error, in which Mr. Bentham fell into fundamental errors." So Sir James was pleased to express himself.

Having before shewn, that to make an act good, it is the intention, not the motive, into which the consideration of utility enters; that the intention is wholly made up of it; but that in the motive it is often altogether wanting; that Sir James confounded motive with intention; and by including all virtue in the motive, and treating good intention as insignificant, did in fact subvert morality,—we have only to attend here to certain wonderful expressions he uses, and certain wonderful consequences which he ascribes to the doctrine, that good intention is a necessary ingredient in a moral act.

Sir James says, that Mr. Bentham, and certain others, no better than he, have *misplaced* the principle of utility. It is not very easy to know what is meant by misplacing a principle.

The only error he specifically imputes to them is that of applying the principle too frequently, referring to it for guidance too often. This is only telling them that they are too careful not to perform immoral acts.

Sir James says, that this is substituting the principle of utility for other motives. He had not the sense to see, that in this he was contending against what he had been lauding in Butler as a wonderful discovery; that the dictate of conscience ought to prevail over all motives, and that the dictate of conscience was nothing but the choice of the greatest good.

To say, that men ought to act on most occasions without regard to the principle of utility, is merely to say, that they ought to act without good intention, that is, without regard to the dictates of a well informed conscience; trusting entirely to some of the inferior impulses of their nature. According to Sir James, conscience is a useless part of our inward constitution; useless, or rather deeply hurtful on all, except some rare occasions. In general, all that is necessary, or good, is to have certain feelings.

This vigilant attention to the dictates of conscience, which Sir James calls "bringing utility too closely and frequently into contact with action" (a phrase truly Sir Jamesical) "lessens," he says, "the intrinsic pleasure of virtue." What Sir James means by "the intrinsic

pleasure of virtue," he does not say. One pleasure at least he cannot mean—and that not an insignificant one, whatever Sir James may think; the testimony of a good conscience, because that belongs only to him who has "brought utility into contact with his action," which either means nothing at all, or means the having taken care that his action has not violated utility; in other words, has been agreeable to the dictates of a well informed conscience.

According to the tenor of Sir James's talk, we must suppose him to mean by his "intrinsic pleasure of virtue," the "delights" we have heard so much about, which "accompany," or "form a part of" the feelings which precede action, in other words, motives. But it is difficult to conceive what the brain of Sir James was about, when he affirmed that a consideration of the consequences of the act to which the motive incites could possibly alter the qualities of the motive, pleasurable, or painful. When a man is incited to perform an act, by gratitude, or pity, or friendship, or the conjugal, parental, or filial affection, a consideration whether the act is proper or not, that is, whether its consequences are good or bad; that is, "bringing utility into contact with it," to use that most ridiculous of phrases, assuredly leaves the gratitude, the pity, the friendship, &c. just what they were, neither more pleasurable, nor less. A motive is not less

a motive, when it is met by counter-considerations, than when it is not.

This consideration of consequences, this listening attentively to the dictates of conscience, not only alters (so says Sir James) the quality of the motive, though it has no operation upon it at all, but does another thing, not less wonderful; "it unfits our habitual feelings for being the most effectual inducements to good conduct." This is the same assertion over again, in not less wonderful phrase; and certainly one more devoid of sense never dribbled from a goose quill. Let gratitude, &c., which are his habitual feelings, be motives of any force he pleases, they are capable of inciting to bad actions, as well as good. Does, then, the consideration, whether the act to which any of them is inciting, be a good act or a bad act, unfit them for being incentives to good acts? It does not look so much like ignorance and folly to make such an assertion, as pure insanity. In every case in which they are inciting to good conduct this consideration affords them the important sanction of conscience, and thus gives its utmost strength to their action. It is only when they are inciting to bad actions that they are opposed by the consideration of consequences, which is but another name for the dictate of conscience.

One may well take up toward the principle of utility, the words in which Boileau addressed his

Maker; "Mon Dieu, que vous avez de sots ennemies!"

That which Sir James gives us next is a case in point. "The frequent appeal to utility as the standard of action," that is, the consideration whether an act is to produce evil or good, "tends," he says, "to introduce an uncertainty with respect to the conduct of other men, which would render all intercourse insupportable." If one did not positively see this, one would have believed it impossible, that such a proposition could have been written, by a person in his senses. That which all other men, from the beginning of time, have regarded as the only thing which gives steadiness and certainty to human action, Sir James had an intellect, or something else in lieu of it, capable of affirming is the very thing which takes it away. Just in proportion as a man is expected to look to the consequences of his acts, and to guide them by a rule, in that exact proportion can his actions be foreseen and counted upon. If a man acts merely from impulses, even those which Sir James calls the habitual feelings, the impulses, for example, of pity, love, gratitude, and so on, all that we know of him is, that he will most commonly be trying to do good to some individual or individuals, but whether in any instance he may not be doing the greatest evil to others, since he "brings not utility into contact with action," that is, does not

consult the rule of right, we can have no certainty whatsoever. This, if general, would most assuredly " render all intercourse insupportable."

Sir James's accusations assume a blacker hue as he goes on. " The frequent appeal to utility affords so fair a disguise for selfish and malignant passions, as often to hide their nature from him who is their prey." Sir James had it deeply at heart to get " the later moralists who adopt the principle of utility " to be thought odious, as well as contemptible. The difficulty here is to find even a shadow of connection between the supposed cause and effect. There is some plausibility, to those at least who judge by words, not the meaning of them, in the assertion that too much attention to utility takes away attention from other things. But that good intention, for which the appeal to utility is but another name, should afford a disguise, or motive (for it is the latter he means), to " selfish and malignant passions," is the most monstrous proposition, that any thing in the shape of a rational creature ever produced. That incessant care, on the part of him who acts, that every thing he does, from whatever motive, shall be productive of good, not evil, should have a tendency to make him an evil-doer of the worst description, is an affirmation which could only be taken for an excessively bad joke, if the weakness of Sir James, under a strong temptation, were not competent to account even

for this. Yet it is the assertion, that a conscientious man is drawn, by his good conscience, to be selfish and malignant; in other words, that a man earnestly intending to do good, does thereby intend to do evil.

"Some taint of these mean and selfish principles will at least creep in." This we must suppose to have a particular application, otherwise it would be impertinent. Where would be the use, in an attack upon the teachers of utility, of telling us, that men in general have some tendency to malignity? What he means is, that the frequent appeal to utility has a tendency to make men malignant.

The proposition is so utterly irrational, that it is substantially a contradiction in terms. When men are malignant, they are seeking to do evil; when they are appealing to utility, they are seeking to do good, and making the best use of their lights to ensure their object. By intending to do good, says Sir James, men are made, to intend to do evil. The stupidity of this accusation is not its worst quality; the immorality of it, is what deserves attention the most.

One feels it as rather a petty business to descend from the matter of such accusations to the terms in which they are couched. But the terms are here so exquisitely Sir Jamesical, that they ought not to be overlooked.

"Some taint." Taint is here a metaphorical

expression. It means literally something which tinges. "The mean and malignant passions" are therefore, first of all, a substance which tinges. This substance which tinges "will creep." It is thus converted from a stuff which tinges into a reptile which creeps. "Some taint of these mean and evil principles will at least creep in, and by their venom give an animation not its own to the cold desire of utility." Taint is in this sentence the nominative to the verb "will give." "Their venom" must mean the venom of the mean and malignant passions. Now for the union of these phrases. "The taint" of these passions, the tinging matter, after having become a reptile, and crept in (where is not said) does, by the venom of these passions (the taint of a thing acting by the venom of it), what? "Give an animation, not its own, to the cold desire of utility." To give animation to a desire, I suppose, means to increase it. And an animation, "not its own," must be an extraordinary increase. Now, then; the taint of the selfish and malignant passions, acting by the venom of the same passions, increases to an extraordinary degree a desire. And what desire? "The desire of utility;" or of the greatest quantity of good. In other words, the malignant passions, which mean the desire of evil, increase to the greatest degree the desire of good.

Sir James now proceeds to wind up; and

assuredly finds a sufficient amount of evil qualities in "the late moralists who adopt the principles of utility," and in the doctrine which they teach, to fix upon them the hatred and indignation of mankind.

After telling us, that they are tainted with evil principles, namely, the selfish and malignant passions, he says, that those of them who "take an active part in these affairs, which often call out unamiable passions," that is, who write on politics, "ought to guard with peculiar watchfulness against such self-delusions." Did Sir James know any of them who had not so guarded himself? He did not. But the man who could make such an insinuation, without grounds, and point it against individuals, would deserve the detestation of mankind, if every other feeling were not precluded by contempt.

We have here another taste of the Sir Jamesical lingo. "Passions," he calls "self-delusions:" States of mind, radically dissimilar.

He goes on. Under these malignant passions, "the sin that must most easily beset them, is that of sliding from general to particular consequences,—that of trying single actions, instead of dispositions, habits, and rules, by the standard of utility,—that of authorizing too great a latitude for discretion and policy in moral conduct,—that of readily allowing exceptions to the most important rules,—that of too lenient a censure

of the use of doubtful means where the end seems to them good,—and that of believing, unphilosophically, as well as dangerously, that there can be any measure or scheme so useful to the world as the existence of men who would not do a base thing for any public advantage. It was said of Andrew Fletcher, he would lose his life to serve his country, but he would not do a base thing to save it."

This sin which "*must* most easily beset" the persons whom Sir James is at such pains to defame; that is, according to the natural interpretation of the phrase, a sin with which they are strongly polluted, is a very multifarious sin. We shall take it piece-meal, as Sir James presents it to us.

"The sin of sliding from general, to particular consequences." In the first place, we have to inquire, what is meant by general and particular consequences. A consequence is an event; but all events are particular. It is true, however, that consequences may be classed; and a class may have a name, and the name of the class may be the same with the name of the individual. But where did Sir James find any harm in sliding from the class to the individual? To do so, is the main use of classification; viz., that we may get propositions which are true of a number (the greater the better) of particulars, and which may be applied to each of them, wheresoever, and

as often as, occasion requires. As an imputation, this is only proof of disgraceful ignorance.

"The sin of trying single actions, instead of dispositions, habits, and rules, by the standard of utility." To try any thing by the standard of utility, is, I suppose, to consider whether it is useful or not. That, I think, is the translation here of the Sir Jamesical tongue. Well, we may consider, it seems, whether dispositions, habits, and rules, are useful. But Sir James will not let us consider whether single actions are useful; we must perform them, without any regard to their consequences, good or bad; that is, as we have already shewn, without any regard to the rule of right, renouncing entirely that authority of conscience, which Sir James talked of in such strains, when he was letting off his phrases about Bishop Butler. This, therefore, is the old dish, hashed up again.

In considering, however, whether "dispositions and habits" are good or bad (Sir James did not know, though he pretends to have read Mr. Mill, that dispositions are habits), what is it that we do? Is it not to consider, whether the acts to which they lead are good or bad? But how are we to judge whether acts be good or bad, but by the consideration of their consequences? That trying, therefore, of "single acts," which Sir James repudiates, is absolutely necessary to that trying of dispositions, which

he seems to recommend. The blindness of poor Sir James, his inability to see the most obvious consequences of his words, is a source of never-ceasing astonishment.—He treats afterwards of rules (though he here jumbles them with habits), under another form of the "besetting sin;" and when we come to them, I shall speak of what he says, in the manner it deserves.

"The sin of authorizing too great a latitude for discretion and policy in moral conduct." This is a foul imputation. That is to say, it is defamatory, and it is without a shadow of foundation, as regards either the individuals aimed at, or the doctrine. To authorize too great a latitude in moral action means to license immoral acts. First, for the doctrine. Where does the doctrine of utility license an immoral act? The doctrine of Sir James, that actions may be performed without a regard to their consequences, does indeed license immoral acts, and that to a notable extent. What is a bad act, but an act which has bad consequences? What is a good act, but an act which has good consequences? The application, therefore, of the principle of utility is the only effectual security against that latitude, of which Sir James says it is the cause. Now, as to the individuals; what evidence had Sir James, that any one of them ever authorized a latitude for immoral acts? Not a particle. And after that, I

leave it to others to affix the proper name to his act.

"The sin of readily allowing exceptions to the most important rules." Did Sir James know any thing of one of the most important of all rules, the rule of making exceptions? Not he. The more proper question, indeed, would be, what did he know? Yet he had certainly heard the vulgar adage, that there is no rule without exceptions. But why should it be imputed as a sin to the assertors of utility, that they readily allow what ought to be allowed; namely, all proper exceptions to all rules, important, or not important? If there are proper and improper exceptions, why did not Sir James distinguish them? And if the assertors of utility allowed improper ones, why did he not point them out? It better suited Sir James to insinuate gratuitously, that they did make improper ones.

I shall confine myself to rules of morality, which alone concern us here. There is no exception to a rule of morality, but what is made by a rule of morality; when a man cannot yield obedience to one rule, without withholding obedience from another. Was Sir James so ignorant as not to know that there are such cases? And that they are so numerous as to cover a large portion of the field of human action?

The subject of moral rules, and the exceptions to them, has been considered with much diligence,

and expounded in great detail, though with not much of the light of philosophy, by the class of ethical writers who have obtained the name of casuists, some of whom to very great industry added very great powers of mind. And the subject is of so much importance, that I am willing to risk the charge of tediousness, by endeavouring to remove the confusion in which Sir James, and writers of his stamp, labour to involve it.

Sir James should have begun by asking, which he seems never to have done, what a general rule is? A rule prescribes what is to be done; but how? Not what is to be done in one instance. What then? What is to be done in a class of instances. This is material. A general rule respects a class. Before a rule can be made, therefore, classification must be performed.

Classification is a subject of the highest importance. In the process of classification there are things, to which it is necessary to pay the greatest attention. Sir James would have known the value of these things, had he read, as he pretended to have done, Mr. Mill's Analysis; where mistakes are cleared up, which have done more to perpetuate darkness on the subject of mind, than any other cause, perhaps than all other causes taken together.

Nature makes no classes. Nature makes individuals. Classes are made by men; and rarely

with such marks as determine certainly what is to be included in them.

Men make classifications, as they do every thing else, for some end. Now, for what end was it that men, out of their innumerable acts, selected a class, to which they gave the name of moral, and another class, to which they gave the name of immoral? What was the motive of this act? What its final cause?

Assuredly the answer to this question is the first step, though Sir James saw it not, towards the solution of his two questions, comprehending the whole of ethical science; first, what makes an act to be moral? and secondly, what are the sentiments with which we regard it?

We may also be assured, that it was some very obvious interest, which recommended this classification; for it was performed, in a certain rough way, in the very rudest states of society.

Farther, we may easily see how, even in very rude states, men were led to it, by little less than necessity. Every day of their lives they had experience of acts, some of which were agreeable, or the cause of what was agreeable, to them; others disagreeable, or the cause of what was disagreeable to them, in all possible degrees.

They had no stronger interest than to obtain the repetition of the one sort, and to prevent the repetition of the other.

The acts in which they were thus interested

were of two sorts; first, those to which the actor was led by a natural interest of his own; secondly, those to which the actor was not led by any interest of his own. About the first sort there was not occasion for any particular concern. They were pretty sure to take place, without any stimulus from without. The second sort, on the contrary, were not likely to take place, unless an interest was artificially created, sufficiently strong to induce the actor to perform them.

And here we clearly perceive the origin of that important case of classification which, before talking of moral rules, Sir James ought to have well understood; the classification of acts as moral, and immoral. The acts, which it was important to other men that each individual should perform, but in which the individual had not a sufficient interest to secure the performance of them, were constituted one class. The acts, which it was important to other men that each individual should abstain from, but in regard to which he had not a personal interest sufficiently strong to secure his abstaining from them, were constituted another class. The first class were distinguished by the name moral acts; the second, by the name immoral.

The interest which men had in securing the performance of the one set of acts, the non-performance of the other, led them by a sort of necessity to think of the means. They had to

create an interest, which the actor would not otherwise have, in the performance of the one sort, the non-performance of the other. And in proceeding to this end, they could not easily miss their way. They had two powers applicable to the purpose. They had a certain quantity of good at their disposal; and they had a certain quantity of evil. If they could apply the good in such a manner as to afford a motive both for the performance and non-performance which they desired, or the evil, in such a manner, as to afford a motive against the performance and non-performance which they wished to prevent, their end was attained.

And this is the scheme which they adopted; and which, in every situation, they have invariably pursued. The whole business of the moral sentiments, moral approbation, and disapprobation, has this for its object, the distribution of the good and evil we have at command, for the production of acts of the useful sort, the prevention of acts of the contrary sort. Can there be a nobler object?

But though men have been thus always right in their general aim, their proceedings have been cruelly defective in the detail; witness the consequence,—the paucity of good acts, the frequency of bad acts, which there is in the world.

A portion of acts having thus been classed into good and bad; and the utility having been perceived of creating motives to incite to the one,

and restrain from the other, a sub-classification was introduced. One portion of these acts was such, that the good and evil available for their production and prevention, could be applied by the community in its conjunct capacity. Another portion was such, that the good and evil available could be applied only by individuals in their individual capacity. The first portion was placed under the control of what is called law; the other remained under the control of the moral sentiments; that is, the distribution of good and evil, made by individuals in their individual capacity.

No sooner was the class made, than the rule followed. Moral acts are to be performed; immoral acts are to be abstained from.

Beside this the general rule, there was needed, for more precise direction, particular rules.

We must remember the fundamental condition, that all rules of action must be preceded by a corresponding classification of actions. All moral rules, comprehended in the great moral rule, must relate to a class of actions comprehended within the grand class, constituted and marked by the term moral. This is the case with grand classes in general. They are subdivided into minor classes, each of the minor classes being a portion of the larger. Thus, the grand class of acts called moral has been divided into certain convenient portions, or sub-classes, and marked by particular names, Just, Beneficent, Brave,

Prudent, Temperate; to each of which classes belongs its appropriate rule, that men should be just, that they should be beneficent, and so on.

Had Sir James understood as much as this, about the doctrine of rules, he would not have blundered as he did about the obligation of exceptions. I shall present for illustration some notorious instances.

Sometimes a whole class of cases are excepted out of preference to another. Take for example the class of beneficent, generous acts; those acts which, according to Sir James, have the delicious feelings to produce them, and which, if his standard of choice were adopted, would stand foremost in point of moral obligation. All those acts are made an exception of in the lump; and whatever the motive to them, how delicious soever the benevolent feeling, not one of them is to be performed, if they are incompatible with the performance of another class, which are remarkable for what Sir James would call the coldness of the feelings which attend them. This case of exception has been erected into a great moral rule, which Sir James could not but have heard of; that men ought to be just, before they are generous.

Did Sir James ever ask himself the meaning of this? ever inquire what was the reason of a preference, which must have appeared to him, upon the delicious feeling principle, so extraordinary,

and so objectionable? It is not sure that Sir James, if he had sought for the reason, would have found it, but it is not far off. A far greater share of what is good for mankind depends upon the performance of just, than of generous actions. Had Sir James been capable of understanding this, he would have seen it to be decisive in favour of that appeal to utility which, there were people he knew of, to whom he would recommend himself, by speaking his nonsense against.

There is another rule of exception, calculated not less to disturb the fine feelings of Sir James; the rule, that charity begins at home. Here the generous acts, in spite of the delights, and feelings, are postponed even to prudent acts, which are not only cold, but another thing, of great disrepute with Sir James, interested, selfish.

There are other things, if they had been shewn to him, which would have astonished Sir James. Some of the cases, the praise of which he resounds with the loudest of his notes, are "exceptions to the most important rules." Suppose an individual can perform a service of great importance to one of two men, but not to both. To which of the two shall he render it? The men are equal in all other respects; but one of them is his father. Instantly the question is decided. There are cases in which men have agreed that the members of our own family should obtain the preference in our beneficent acts to the

rest of our fellow-creatures. These are so many cases of exception to the general rule. The reason also why all men have concurred in the propriety of making those exceptions, is obvious. There is great utility in making them. The limited power of beneficence possessed by an individual is likely to produce the greatest effects when he exerts it within a sphere proportioned to itself, in favour of those individuals the wants of whom are best known to him, and with whom he has naturally the strongest sympathies.

The rules of justice are a tissue, in which rules and exceptions are almost equally numerous; a circumstance which Sir James, though a lawyer, and ex-judge, and professor of jurisprudence, appears never to have reflected on.

If any one had told Sir James how much even of the morality of courage was composed of exceptions, what a revelation it would have been to him! Courage is understood to consist mainly in a readiness to meet danger without fear, and the greater the danger, the greater the courage. Yet it is not only allowed, but laudable, to avail yourself of every advantage against your enemy; that is, to lessen the danger of meeting him, by all the means in your power, even lying; in other words, to gain your object with the *minimum* of courage. What are all arts and practices for acquiring skill in the use of weapons, but means to the same end; lessening the danger of all

encounters with an enemy?—exceptions, assuredly, to the rule of courage; yet laudable, because tending to general utility, the end for which the rule of courage exists.

Sir James was not only so ill read in the rules of practical morality, as to be ignorant that a great part of them were rules of exception, but he has an argument to shew, that these exceptions, besides being immoral, produce damage to what he calls the "machinery of the mind," and also the "health of the mind."

"It is impossible," he says, "to combine the benefit of the general habit with the advantages of occasional deviation; for any such deviation either produces remorse, or weakens the habit, and prepares the way for its gradual destruction."

I promised above, that I would notice this observation here. And the importance of clearing the subject of morals from the confusion in which brains of the texture of Sir James are prone to involve it, makes me desirous of fulfilling my promise, though, as far as regards Mr. Bentham, and Mr. Mill, it is wholly superfluous. They had no occasion to speak of exceptions, and do not. Their subject was not practical morality.

The general habit, says Sir James, is impaired by every occasional deviation. Let us try his proposition by a case or two. The habit of walking is impaired by occasional sitting, or standing. The habit of talking is impaired by

occasional silence. The habit of speaking English is impaired by learning to speak French. Is he not a strange companion, who could make a general proposition, involving these particular ones? Did Sir James really imagine that a man could not have in perfection the habit of performing generous acts, and yet make all the exceptions which the superior calls of justice required? Is it impossible to have the habit of performing just acts, and yet to remember the maxim, *summum jus, summa injuria*? Such a course implies no enfeebling of the moral habits. Had Sir James understood the subject better, he would have seen that it is only completing the system of them. A habit of obeying the rules of exception is as necessary to moral acting, as that of obeying the other rules.

Sir James, in labouring to introduce confusion of ideas into the doctrine of morals, talks such language about habits, and the necessity of that promptitude in action, which leaves no time for reflection (as if acting without reflection, in the greatest affairs, were a virtue), that I deem it necessary to make a reference to those mere elements of the science, which he is thus ignorant enough to contradict.

In the performance of our duties two sets of cases may be distinguished. There is one set in which a direct estimate of the good of the particular act is inevitable; and the man acts immo-

rally who acts without making it. There are other cases in which it is not necessary.

The first are those, which have in them so much of singularity, as to prevent their coming within the limits of any established class. In such cases a man has but one guide; he must consider the consequences, or act not as a moral, or rational agent at all.

The second are cases of such ordinary and frequent occurrence as to be distinguished into classes. And every body knows, even Sir James knew, that when a class of acts are performed regularly and frequently, they are at last performed by habit; in other words, the idea of the act and the performance of it follow so easily and speedily, that they seem to cohere, and to be but one operation. It is only necessary to recall some of the more familiar instances, to see the mode of this formation. In playing on a musical instrument, every note, at first, is found by an effort. Afterwards, the proper choice is made so rapidly as to appear as if made by a mechanical process in which the mind has no concern. The same is the case with moral acts. When they have been performed with frequency and uniformity, for a sufficient length of time, a habit is generated. The meaning of this, however, needs to be a little opened, since in heads like that of Sir James, strange work is apt to be made of it.

When a man acts from habit, he does not act

without reflection. He only acts with a very rapid reflection. In no class of acts does a man begin to act by habit. He begins without habit; and acquires the habit by frequency of acting. The consideration, on which the act is founded, and the act itself, form a sequence. And it is obvious from the familiar cases of music and of speaking, that it is a sequence at first not very easily performed. By every repetition, however, it becomes easier. The consideration occurs with less effort; the action follows with less effort; they take place with greater and greater rapidity, till they seem blended. To say, that this is acting without reflection, is only ignorance; for it is thus seen to be a case of acting by reflection so easily and rapidly, that the reflection and the act cannot be distinguished from one another. Habits of moral acting are habits of obedience to the principle of utility, and are so far from being liable to be prevented or hurt, as poor Sir James would have it, by bringing utility, as he phrases it, "into contact with action," that they can be formed by no other means.

On the formation of moral habits, reference being had to the confusion in the ideas of Sir James, another word may be necessary.

Since moral acts are not performed at first by habit, but each upon the consideration which recommends it; upon what considerations, we may be asked, do moral acts begin to be performed?

The question has two meanings, and it is necessary to reply to both. It may be asked, upon what consideration the men of our own age and country, for example, at first, and before a habit is formed, perform moral acts? Or, it may be asked, upon what consideration did men originally perform moral acts?

To the first of these questions every one can reply from his own memory and observation. We perform moral acts at first, from authority. Our parents tell us, that we ought to do this, ought not to do that. They are anxious that we should obey their precepts. They have two sets of influences, with which to work upon us; praise and blame; reward and punishment. All the acts which they say we ought to do, are praised in the highest degree, all those which they say we ought not to do, are blamed in the highest degree. In this manner, the ideas of praise and blame become associated with certain classes of acts, at a very early age, so closely, that they cannot easily be disjoined. No sooner does the idea of the act occur than the idea of praise springs up along with it, and clings to it. And generally these associations exert a predominant influence during the whole of life.

Our parents not only praise certain kinds of acts, blame other kinds; but they praise us when we perform those of the one sort, blame us when we perform those of the other. In this manner

other associations are formed. The idea of ourselves performing certain acts is associated with the idea of our being praised, performing certain other acts with the idea of our being blamed, so closely that the ideas become at last indissoluble. In this association consist the very important complex ideas of praise-worthiness, and blame-worthiness. An act which is praiseworthy, is an act with the idea of which the idea of praise is indissolubly joined; an agent who is praiseworthy is an agent with the idea of whom the idea of praise is indissolubly joined. And in the converse case, that of blame-worthiness, the formation of the idea is similar.

Many powerful circumstances come in aid of these important associations, at an early age. We find, that not only our parents act in this manner, but all other parents. We find that grown people act in this manner, not only towards children, but towards one another. The associations, therefore, are unbroken, general, and all-comprehending.

Our parents administer not only praise and blame, to induce us to perform acts of one sort, abstain from acts of another sort, but also rewards and punishments. They do so directly; and, further, they forward all our inclinations in the one case, baulk them in the other. So does every body else. We find our comforts excessively abridged by other people, when we act in one way, enlarged when we act in another way. Hence

another most important class of associations; that of an increase of well-being from the good-will of our fellow-creatures, if we perform acts of one sort, of an increase of misery from their ill-will, if we perform those of another sort.

In this manner it is that men, born in the social state, acquire the habits of moral acting, and certain affections connected with it, before they are capable of reflecting upon the grounds which recommend the acts either to praise or blame. Nearly at this point the greater part of them remain, continuing to perform moral acts and to abstain from the contrary, chiefly from the habits they have acquired, and the authority upon which they originally acted; though it is not possible that any man should come to the years and blessing of reason, without perceiving, at least in an indistinct and general way, the advantage which mankind derive from their acting towards one another in one way, rather than another.

We come now to the second question, viz. what are the considerations upon which men originally performed moral acts? The answer to this question is substantially contained in the explanation already given of the classification of acts as moral and immoral.

When men began to mark the distinction between acts, and were prompted to praise one class, blame another, they did so, either because

the one sort benefitted, the other hurt them; or for some other reason. If for the first reason, the case is perfectly intelligible. The men had a motive, which they understood, and which was adequate to the end. If it was not on account of utility that men classed some acts as moral, others as immoral, on what other account was it?

To this question, an answer, consisting of any thing but words, has never been returned.

It has been said, that there is a beauty, and a deformity, in moral and immoral acts, which recommended them to the distinctions they have met with.

It is obvious to reply to this hypothesis, that the mind of a savage, that is, a mind in the state in which the minds of all men were, when they began to classify their acts, was not likely to be much affected by the ideal something called the beauty of acts. To receive pain or pleasure from an act, to obtain, or be deprived of, the means of enjoyment by an act; to like the acts and the actors, whence the good proceeded, dislike those whence the evil proceeded; all these were things which they understood.

But we must endeavour to get a little nearer to the bottom of this affair.

In truth, the term beauty, as applied to acts, is just as unintelligible to the philosopher, as to the savage. Is the beauty of an act one thing; the morality of it another? Or are they two names

for the same thing? If they are two things, what is the beauty, distinct from the morality? If they are the same thing, what is the use of the name morality? It only tends to confusion.

But this is not all. The beautiful is that which excites in us the emotion of beauty, a state of mind with which we are acquainted by experience. This state of mind has been successfully analysed, and shewn to consist of a train of pleasurable ideas, awakened in us by the beautiful object.

But is it in this way only that we are concerned in moral acts? Do we value them for nothing, but as we value a picture, or a piece of music, for the pleasure of looking at them, or hearing them? Every body knows the contrary. Acts are objects of importance to us, on account of their consequences, and nothing else. This constitutes a radical distinction between them and the things called beautiful. Acts are hurtful or beneficial, moral or immoral, virtuous or vicious. But it is only an abuse of language to call them beautiful or ugly.

That it is jargon, the slightest reflection is sufficient to evince; for what is the beauty of an act, detached from its consequences? We shall be told, perhaps, that the beauty of an act was never supposed to be detached from its consequences. The beauty consists in the consequences. I am contented with the answer. But observe to what it binds you. The consequences of acts

are the good or evil they do. According to you, therefore, the beauty of acts is either the utility of them, or it is nothing at all;—a beautiful ground on which to dispute with us, that acts are classed as moral, not on account of their utility, but on account of their beauty.

It will be easily seen, from what has been said, that they who ascribe the classification of acts, as moral, and immoral, to a certain taste, an agreeable or disagreeable sentiment which they excite (among whom are included the Scottish professors Hutcheson, and Brown, and David Hume himself, though on his part with wonderful inconsistency)—hold the same theory with those who say, that beauty is the source of the classification of moral acts. Things are classed as beautiful, or deformed, on account of a certain taste, or inward sentiment. If acts are classed in the same way, on account of a certain taste or inward sentiment, they deserve to be classed under the names beautiful, and deformed; otherwise not.

I hope it is not necessary for me to go minutely into the exposure of the other varieties of jargon, by which it has been endeavoured to account for the classification of acts, as moral, and immoral. "Fitness" is one of them. Acts are approved on account of their fitness. When fitness is hunted down, it is brought to bay exactly at the place where beauty was. Fitness is either the goodness of the consequences, or it is nothing at all.

The same is the case with "Right Reason," or "Moral Reason." An act according to moral reason, is an act, the consequences of which are good. Moral reason, therefore, is another name, and not a bad name, for the principle of utility.

Having thus guarded the reader, though at the expense of rather a long dissertation, against the confusion of ideas in which Sir James laboured to involve the doctrine of moral rules, I now proceed to the remaining parts, or aspects (it is difficult to know which of the two he thinks he is giving us), of "the sin which must most easily beset" those who class human actions as moral or immoral on the principle of utility.

After the sin of making exceptions to important rules, he charges "the sin of too lenient a censure of the use of doubtful means, when the end seems to them to be good."

The morality of this accusation is that which first challenges attention. The ordinary character of bad men is, that they are little scrupulous about means for the attainment of their ends. This, therefore, is a form of words calculated to class the assertors of utility with bad men in general.

When we examine the charge, we see that it is either the same with the foregoing, a poor repetition of the complaint about exceptions to important rules; which we have seen is only a complaint against acting morally, that is, preferring the higher obligation to the lower; or it is the

charge of disregarding, in the choice of means, moral obligations altogether. In that sense, it would be a direct and impudent violation of the truth. If asserted of the doctrine, it is a contradiction in terms; an assertion, that the successful pursuit of the greatest good is the pursuit of evil. If asserted of the individuals, it has all the turpitude of an intention to do injury by an imputation which is false.

Follows "the sin of believing unphilosophically as well as dangerously, that there can be any measure or scheme so useful to the world as the existence of men who would not do a base thing for any public advantage."

This is a charge against the assertors of utility of mistaking the less for the greater good. If this mistake is shewn to them, they will be the most inconsistent of men, if they do not correct it; for the pursuit of the greatest good is but another name for their principle. What has Sir James done to shew it? Nothing, as you may suppose.

The two things which the wisdom of Sir James here puts at the two ends of his balance are, measures or schemes of public advantage, and men who will not do a base thing. The former kicks the beam. Yet in the former are included such things as the best form of government, successful combination to save a country from foreign subjugation, or to deliver it from a body of internal and misruling enemies. One would like to know,

how many of Sir James's worthies we ought to have, to overbalance things of so much value.

Next we have need to know, what we get by these wonderful persons; what they do for us. By those other things, which Sir James treats as inferior, we know that we get advantages of unspeakable importance.

All the information we obtain from Sir James is, that his worthies will not do a base thing. But this is only negative. It does not follow that they will do any good at all. If so, we should have a poor bargain in exchanging for them all schemes and measures calculated to benefit the community. Was there ever a philosopher like Sir James?

Again:—What are we to understand by Sir James's "base thing?" What does he mean by "base?" Is it immoral? If so, it will not answer his purpose. In that case, he does not prove any thing against the assertors of utility; he agrees with them. A man who will not do an immoral act, is a man who will not prefer the less to the greater good. Now this, according to the principle of utility, is just what ought to be done. If Sir James means by "base," something different from immoral, he has found out a principle, which is superior to morality, and which is entitled to supersede it.

Sir James gives us an example.

"It was said of Andrew Fletcher, *he would*

lose his life to serve his country; but would not do a base thing to save it." This is the flourish of a panegyrist; and of one of the same class or clan with Sir James.

To an ordinary mind, it would appear, that when a man had it in his power to save his country, and did not, he acted as one of the basest, not one of the best of men.

To save a country, the loss of millions of lives, the destruction of half the population, and reduction of the other half to the extremity of want and misery, have sometimes not been thought too great a sacrifice. To rescue from all this evil, there is an act, which Andrew Fletcher, or Sir James Mackintosh, no matter which, would not do. If weighed in the moral balance, it would not be easy to find an act, within the competence of Andrew, upon which so much would depend; and if, to avoid some smaller evil, consequent upon an act of his, he coolly preferred this overbalance of evil, he might be a visionary, or a mountebank, but certainly not a virtuous man.

Let us try the case by an instance or two: and we shall begin by an act, which we shall express by its most offensive name. Would Andrew not have lied, to save all this evil? That he would; and for a much smaller matter. Suppose him leading a party of his countrymen, engaged in deadly struggle for the salvation of their country; and that he sees a prospect of

surprising the enemy. Would he hesitate to give out, to declare, ay, and to swear, if need were, that he was to march in one direction, when he intended to march in another?

Would Andrew scruple to take away, and with his own hand, the life of an innocent man, on a much more insignificant occasion than that of saving his country? Suppose him defending a fortress of some importance, and that from the top of the wall, he sees taken by the enemy in a sally, a man in possession of a secret essential to the defence of the place, upon whose constancy he cannot depend; instantly he levels his rifle and shoots him through the heart. Sir James, with whatever inclination to chicane, would not have ventured to condemn this act, because he knew that Andrew would have ordered a sentinel, whom he had found asleep at his post, to be shot before his eyes. That Andrew would have made very free with other men's property in such a situation, Sir James could not have called in doubt. He would not have alleged that as soon as the necessity was pressing, Andrew would not have turned the inhabitants, men, women, and children, not allowing them to carry with them an article belonging to them which could be useful to himself, out of their houses, and out of the place, to starve, or survive, in the most dreadful of all circumstances, as accident might determine.

What then is the base act which Andrew would not have done to save his country?

It would be curious to mark the pains taken by Sir James, in his controversy with the assertors of utility, to place public spirit, patriotism, low in the scale of duties; were it not a characteristic of those who write for an aristocracy. Examine carefully the writings which have issued from such sources: you will find a straining, so general as to be almost constant, to make the duty a man owes to his country be regarded as a mean duty. For that purpose, the narrow affections are exalted above the enlarged, and the great moralities are lost sight of, in a blaze of panegyric on the small.

It is sufficiently obvious, what ends are served by this; and what motives are thence supplied for decrying the principle of utility; which marshals the duties in their proper order, and will not permit mankind to be deluded, as so long they have been, sottishly to prefer the lower to the higher good, and to hug the greater evil, from fear of the less.

There is more of Sir James, about the delight of the feelings, and about the heart as the seat of virtue; but I am tired of this work, and so must be the reader. I shall, therefore, proceed to a new charge of Sir James against those whom he calls the Bentham school. They are totally without taste. He might just as well have talked

of their stature, or of the colour of their hair, as helping us to an estimate of the truth and value of their doctrines. This charge could serve only one purpose, a purpose evidently dear to Sir James, that of giving unfavourable impressions of those men. The want of taste, he knew, was a very discrediting circumstance, in the minds of those whose admiration he wanted for himself.

These are the words of the charge: "The coincidence of Mr. Bentham's school with the ancient Epicurean, in the disregard of the pleasures of taste and of the arts dependent on imagination, is a proof, both of the inevitable adherence of much of the popular sense of the words interest and pleasure, to the same words in their philosophical acceptation, and of the pernicious influence of narrowing utility to mere visible and tangible objects, to the exclusion of those which form the larger part of human enjoyment."

Here are a parcel of words, strung together in a manner, the wonderfulness of which we shall presently see; but of which the main object evidently is, to fix upon those whom he calls the school of Bentham the charge of confining their principle of morality to sensible objects; placing "the larger part of human enjoyment," that is, of human happiness, out of its sphere.

No man could have written this sentence, who was not habitually regardless of the truth or falsehood of what he uttered; trusting for im-

punity to the cloudiness of his phrase, and the carelessness of those whom he addressed. That the principle of utility takes in every ingredient wherein human happiness consists, is the very definition of the term. Mr. Bentham and Mr. Mill are the only writers belonging to the imaginary "school," who have touched on more than detached portions of the doctrine. But no other writers, who can be named, have so carefully traced every modification of human enjoyment, and suffering, and so minutely explained whence they are derived, how, if complex, they are formed, and what their value as so many items in the sum of human happiness or misery. To say, that these men have paid attention to no sources of enjoyment, but those which are visible and tangible, is one of the most barefaced pieces of misrepresentation ever ventured upon by any man who had any character to lose.

Sir James charges the ancient Epicureans with a "disregard of the pleasures of taste, and of the arts dependent on imagination." This is notoriously untrue. Were Lucretius, and Horace, and Virgil, and Julius Cæsar, to name no more, regardless of the pleasures of taste, and of the arts dependent on imagination?

And whence did Sir James derive the ground of his assertion with respect to those among the moderns whom he attacks? I answer, he had no grounds. The assertion is utterly without foundation.

And now let us see, in what manner Sir James puts his ideas together. The coincidence of certain ancients and certain moderns in certain particulars, which Sir James imputes to them falsely; that is, a coincidence which has no existence; proves, he says, two things; first, that much of the meaning of the words "interest" and "pleasure," in the popular use of them, sticks to them in the philosophical. Why, the whole of it sticks. Interest and pleasure have the same meaning in all cases; though all men are not acquainted with all pleasures, and some would make out one list, some another, both of pleasures, and the causes of them.

The next thing which this coincidence, this non-existent something, proves, is, that "narrowing utility to mere visible and tangible objects is pernicious." It is fortunate for this proposition that it needs no such proving. Nobody ever did, or will dispute it. What needs proof is, that which Sir James affirms, in opposition to proof, that the assertors of utility do so narrow it.

Sir James having made a school for Mr. Bentham, by force of his imagination, resolved to leave nothing undone, to disparage those whom he thought proper to include in it.

After having finished with them, in the "Ethical Theory" department, the only one he told us which came within his province, we find him stepping out of his province, in order to impute to them sins in the Logical department.

They are ignorant, he says, of the true method of philosophizing. This he proves, by asserting that they, like the Cartesians, endeavour to account for too much by a single principle; whereupon he gives us to know his depth, in physical science, as well as moral, by a discourse on the laws of nature; the complication which Newton introduced into the account of those laws; and the exploits of Laplace to reconcile the phenomena to Newton's complexity, "by introducing intermediate laws, and calculating disturbing powers;" —a specimen of Sir James which I recommend to the reader's curiosity.

Sir James was probably not aware, that this charge against Mr. Bentham and the school he gives him, is the old and stale objection to philosophy itself; the same in substance as the vulgar cry of, No theory! No speculation!

I wonder what Sir James imagined it is, which a man does, when he philosophizes. Those who speak of philosophy, like men who know any thing about it, say, that its business consists in tracing up particular phenomena to a general principle, and always from the less general to the more general; and that the most successful philosopher is he who comprehends under one principle the greatest number.

It is a novelty in impertinence to tell us that a philosopher is in the wrong, because he goes to the bottom of his subject. The Cartesians did

not err, by tracing phenomena to a very general principle, but by assuming gratuitously a principle, and one which did not account for the phenomena. Had they traced them up to a real principle, which did account for them, the more general the principle, that is, the more numerous the phenomena which it embraced, the more splendid would have been their success; and their philosophy the more signally beneficial.

Sir James appears to include, under his present accusation, the opinion that the principle of utility accounts for the moral phenomena. But if this be accounting for too much by a single principle, he should have told us what other principle or principles are to be used in aid of the principle of utility, and how much remains to be accounted for, when all that it can dispose of is taken away.

Instead of this, Sir James here quits Mr. Bentham, and the principle of utility, to fasten on Mr. Mill; and two articles written by him for the Supplement to the Encyclopædia Britannica, one on Government, another on Education, are the subjects of attack.

On the treatise on government, Sir James delivers his wisdom thus: "Mr. Mill, for example, derives the whole theory of government from the single fact, that every man pursues his interest, when he knows it; which he assumes to be a sort of self evident practical principle, if

such a phrase be not contradictory. That a man's pursuing the interest of another, or indeed any other object in nature, is just as *conceivable* as that he should pursue his own interest, is a proposition which seems never to have occurred to this acute and ingenious writer. Nothing, however, can be more certain than its truth, if the term interest be employed in its proper sense of general well-being, which is the only acceptation in which it can serve the purpose of his arguments. If indeed the term be employed to denote the gratification of a predominant desire, his proposition is self-evident, but wholly unserviceable in his argument; for it is clear that individuals and multitudes often desire what they know to be most inconsistent with their general welfare. A nation, as much as an individual, and sometimes more, may not only mistake its interest, but, perceiving it clearly, may prefer the gratification of a strong passion to it. The whole fabric of his political reasoning seems to be overthrown by this single observation; and instead of attempting to explain the immense variety of political facts, by the simple principle of a contest of interests, we are reduced to the necessity of once more referring them to that variety of passions, habits, opinions, and prejudices, which we discover only by experience." And in a note Sir James says, "The same mode of reasoning has been adopted by the writer of a late criticism

on Mr. Mill's Essay.—See Edinburgh Review, No. 97, March 1829."—This is convenient; because the answer, which does for Sir James, will answer the same purpose with the Edinburgh Review.

All that is here alledged against Mr. Mill, in the way of matter, is—that men do not always act in conformity with their true interest, sometimes mistaking it, and sometimes impelled by passion to disregard it. Sir James says, and according to him, "the writer of a late criticism in the Edinburgh Review" says, that this "overthrows the whole fabric of Mr. Mill's political reasoning." So far is this from being true, that Mr. Mill's "political reasoning" is in perfect conformity with it. We have had experience enough of Sir James, not to be surprised that he should commit this trifling mistake. But with respect to Mr. Mill, his vindication is complete; unless the assertion I have now made be successfully contradicted.

Sir James's wording, however, is here a matter of curiosity. He says, that the fact of men's acting sometimes without an immediate view to their own interest, never occurred to Mr. Mill, as a thing conceivable. Did Sir James expect any body to believe him, when he made this assertion?

To come a little nearer to the point; is there a single proposition of Mr. Mill's which implies an

ignorance of this fact? Or is there one of his conclusions which is vitiated by inattention to it?

To Mr. Mill, considering as he did that the principles of government mean the principles by which men are governed, and the principles by which men are governed mean the principles by which their acts are determined, it was not only necessary, it was indispensable, that he should ask himself, what is that within a man which has the principal influence in determining his actions.—The answer of Mr. Mill was,—"the man's view of his own interest." Would Sir James have had him return any other answer? Sir James abstains from saying this. But he loudly condemns Mr. Mill for what he did answer.

I am not at all disposed to quibble with Sir James, about the meaning of the word "interest." It is very obvious, to any one who has read Mr. Mill's Treatise, in what sense he uses it. He uses it, neither in the refined sense of a man's best interest, or what is most conducive to his happiness upon the whole; nor to signify every object which he desires, though that is a very intelligible meaning too. Mr. Mill uses it, in its rough and common acceptation, to denote the leading objects of human desire; Wealth, Power, Dignity, Ease; including escape from the contrary, Poverty, Impotence, Degradation, Toil.

I suppose nobody, at least nobody now alive, will dispute, that, taking men generally, the bulk

of their actions is determined by consideration of these objects. As little, I suppose, will it be disputed, that in deliberating on the best means for the government of men in society, it is the business of philosophers and legislators (what title had Sir James to meddle with the business of either?)—to look to the more general laws of their nature, rather than the exceptions. The bearing of Sir James's talk (you can seldom gather more from it than its bearing) is to recommend attention principally to the exceptions. At least, his whole complaint of Mr. Mill is that he did not confine his attention to the exceptions.

Sir James, though he had no ideas of his own to set him right, might have derived from his memory, which was reported as good (*i. e.* for words and dates—possibly enough it did not extend to ideas), that Mr. Mill, if in error, in this matter, is in good company.

Bishop Berkeley says, "Self-love being a principle of all others the most universal, and the most deeply engraven on our hearts, it is natural for us to regard things as they are fitted to augment or impair our own happiness; and accordingly we denominate them *good* or *evil*." * This is a very comprehensive decision; the very terms *good* and *evil* derive their meaning from self-interest.

The following quotation from David Hume is

* Berkeley's Works, ii. p. 7. Ed. 4to.

of the more importance; because it teaches the very same application of the same general law, for which, carried out into detail, Mr. Mill is accused, as shewing his ignorance, at once, of the most notorious facts in human nature, and of the proper mode of philosophizing.

"Political writers have established it as a maxim, that, in contriving any system of government, and fixing the several checks and controls of the constitution, every man ought to be supposed a knave, and to have no other end, in all his actions, than private interest. By this interest we must govern him, and by means of it make him, notwithstanding his insatiable avarice and ambition, co-operate to public good. Without this, say they, we shall in vain boast of the advantages of any constitution, and shall find in the end, that we have no security for our liberties and possessions, except the good will of our rulers; that is, we shall have no security at all."

"It is, therefore, a just political maxim, that every man must be supposed a knave; though at the same time, it appears somewhat strange, that a maxim should be true in politics which is false in fact. But to satisfy us on this head, we may consider, that men are generally more honest in their private than in their public capacity, and will go greater lengths to serve a party, than when their own private interest is alone concerned. Honour is a great check upon mankind;

but when a considerable body of men act together, this check is in a great measure removed; since a man is sure to be approved of by his own party for what promotes the common interest; and he soon learns to despise the clamours of adversaries. To which we may add, that every court or senate is determined by the greater number of voices; so that, if self-interest influences only the majority (as it will always do), the whole senate follows the allurements of this separate interest, and acts as if it contained not one member who had any regard to public interest and liberty."

"When there offers, therefore, to our censure and examination, any plan of government, real or imaginary, where the power is distributed among several courts and several orders of men, we should always consider the separate interest of each court and each order; and if we find that, by the skilful division of power, this interest must necessarily, in its operation, concur with the public, we may pronounce that government to be wise and happy. If, on the contrary, separate interests be not checked, and be not directed to the public, we ought to look for nothing but faction, disorder, and tyranny, from such a government. In this opinion I am justified by experience, as well as by the authority of all philosophers and politicians, both ancient and modern."*

* Essay on the Independency of Parliament.

Did Sir James consider this an example of the error of the Cartesians? Did he condemn Mr. Hume, because he "derived the whole theory of government from the single fact, that every man pursues his own interest when he knows it; which he assumes to be a sort of self-evident practical principle, if such a phrase be not contradictory."

The common experience of mankind is well expressed by the old dramatic writer:—

> Verum illud verbum est, vulgo quod dici solet,
> Omnes sibi malle melius esse, quam alteri.
> *Teren. Andr. Act* ii. *Sc.* 5.

The next quotation I deem of importance; both on account of the reputation the author enjoys, as being what they call a practical man; and from the striking manner in which he puts and applies the very fact, which we have to guard against Sir James's perversion.

"As the Creator is a being, not only of infinite power and wisdom, but also of infinite goodness, he has been pleased so to contrive the constitution and frame of humanity, that we should want no other prompter to inquire after and pursue the rule of right, but only our own self-love, that universal principle of action. For he has so intimately connected, so inseparably interwoven, the laws of eternal justice with the happiness of each individual, that the latter cannot be obtained but by observing the

former; and, if the former be punctually obeyed, it cannot but induce the latter. In consequence of which mutual connexion of justice and human felicity, he has not perplexed the law of nature with a multitude of abstracted rules and precepts, referring merely to the fitness or unfitness of things, as some have gravely surmised; but has graciously reduced the rule of obedience to this one paternal precept, '*that man should pursue his own happiness.*' This is the foundation of what we call ethics, or natural law. For the several articles into which it is branched in our system, amount to no more than demonstrating, that this or that action tends to man's real happiness, and therefore, very justly concluding that the performance of it is a part of the law of nature; or, on the other hand, that this or that action is destructive of man's real happiness, and therefore, that the law of nature forbids it. This law of nature, being coeval with mankind, and dictated by God himself, is of course superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times. No human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this: and such of them as are valid derive all their force, and all their authority, mediately or immediately from this original." *

In the opinion of Blackstone, self-love is not

* Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England, Introd. § 2.

only *the universal principle of action*, but, what is necessarily consequent upon this, *the sole principle of moral obligation*. If the theory of government is not built upon the universal principle of action, I should like to know on what foundation Sir James would place it.

Sir James would have done well to observe what is said by Blackstone about the law of nature, and the authority of human laws: that the law of nature commands what is favourable, forbids what is unfavourable to man's happiness: and that no human law, which is contrary to this law of nature, is of any validity. Did Sir James not think that this is giving a pretty extensive operation to the principle of utility?

Mr. Mill, going upon what thus appears, notwithstanding the contradiction of Sir James, to be pretty sure ground, inferred, that if the interest of those who rule could, by any contrivance, be made to coincide with the interest of those who obey, we should have the best security, which the nature of man affords, that the interest of the community would be steadily pursued by rulers; because we should have the security of their own interest. And though it may perhaps be true of certain individuals out of a multitude, that they are not habitually governed by their own interest; yet, as is truly remarked by Mr. Hume, it may be affirmed of all bodies of men, that they are guided by the principle of interest invariably.

The necessity, which those who examine what is the best form of government are under, of building on this foundation, is the leading position in Mr. Mill's discourse. The truth of it is self-evident. But, for the due exposure of the ignorance and presumption of Sir James, who derides it, a reference may be useful to some of those who have had occasion expressly to teach it.

The whole of Plato's Republic may be regarded as a development, and, in many of its parts, a masterly development, of the principle applied by Mr. Mill; that identity of interests between the governors and the governed affords the only security for good government. In the third book, after a long and beautiful deduction of the qualities required in the rulers (guardians, he calls them) of the state, the result is exhibited in the following striking expressions.

Οὐκοῦν φρονίμως τε εἰς τοῦτο δεῖ ὑπάρχειν καὶ δυνατὸς καὶ ἔτι κηδεμόνας τῆς πόλεως; Ἔστι ταῦτα. Κήδοιτο δέ γ' ἄν τις μάλιστα τούτῳ ὅ τυγχάνοι φιλῶν; Ἀναγκη. Καὶ μὴν τοῦτό γ' ἄν μαλιστα φιλοῖ, ᾧ ξυμφέρειν ἡγοῖτο τα αὐτὰ καὶ ἑαυτῷ, καὶ ὅταν μάλιστα ἐκείνῳ μὲν εὖ πράττοντος οἴηται ξυμβαίνειν καὶ ἑαυτῷ εὖ πράττειν, μηδὲ τοὐναντίον; Οὕτως, ἔφη.*

The meaning is, that those chosen guardians should have three grand qualities; wisdom adapted to their trust; power adapted to their

* Platon. Respub. l. iii. § 19.

trust; and above all, care for the interests of the community: That a man's care, however, of other interests than his own, is then best secured, when both are promoted by the same events; because when any one expects that every addition to the happiness of others will be attended with a similar addition to his own, he pursues their happiness with the same constancy as his own.

Such is "the fabric of political reasoning," which Sir James tells us, for our edification, is overthrown by his sapient remark, that "a nation, as much as an individual, and sometimes more, may not only mistake its interest, but, perceiving it clearly, may prefer the gratification of a strong passion to it."

Does it, according to his logical head, follow, that because a nation may sometimes mistake its true interest, therefore its best security for good government is not to be found in effecting an identity of interests between those who govern, and itself?

"Nothing," says Mr. Burke, "is security to any individual, but the common interest of all."*

Without identity of interest with those they rule, the rulers, Plato says, instead of being the guardians of the flock, become wolves and its devourers.

Δεινότατον γάρ πᾳ πάντων καὶ αἴσχιστον ποιμεσι

* Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol. Burke's Works. Ed. in 4to. vol. ii. p. 112.

τοιούτους γε καὶ οὕτω τρέφειν κύνας ἐπικούρους ποιμνίων, ὥστε ὑπὸ ἀκολασίας ἢ λιμοῦ ἤ τινος ἄλλου κακοῦ ἔθους αὐτοὺς τοὺς κύνας ἐπιχειρῆσαι τοῖς προβάτοις κακουργεῖν, καὶ ἀντὶ κυνῶν λύκοις ὁμοιωθῆναι.*

There is another passage in the Fifth Book of the same remarkable production, in which the necessity of this identification, which he calls ἡ μὲν ἡδονῆς τε καὶ λύπης κοινωνια, is still farther expounded, and set in a striking point of view.

Ἔχομεν οὖν τι μεῖζον κακὸν πόλει ἢ ἐκεῖνο ὃ ἂν αὐτὴν διασπᾷ καὶ ποιῇ πολλὰς ἀντὶ μιᾶς; ἢ μεῖζον ἀγαθὸν τοῦ ὃ ἂν ξυνδῇ τε καὶ ποιῇ μίαν; Οὐκ ἔχομεν. Οὔκουν ἡ μὲν ἡδονῆς τε καὶ λύπης κοινωνία ξυνδεῖ, ὅταν ὅτι μάλιστα πάντες οἱ πολῖται τῶν αὐτῶν γιγνομένων τε καὶ ἀπολλυμένων παραπλησίως χαίρωσι καὶ λυπῶνται; Παντάπασι μὲν οὖν, ἔφη. Ἡ δέ γε τῶν τοιούτων ἰδίωσις διαλύει, ὅταν οἱ μὲν περίαλγεῖς οἱ δὲ περιχαρεῖς γίγνωνται ἐπὶ τοῖς αὐτοῖς παθήμασι τῆς πόλεώς τε καὶ τῶν ἐν τῇ πόλει. Τί δ' οὔ; Ἆρ' οὖν ἐκ τοῦδε τὸ τοιόνδε γίγνεται, ὅτάν μὴ ἅμα φθέγγωνται ἐν τῇ πόλει τὰ τοιάδε ῥήματα, τό τε ἐμόν καὶ τὸ οὐκ ἐμόν; καὶ περὶ τοῦ ἀλλοτρίου κατὰ ταὐτά; Κομιδῇ μὲν οὖν. Ἐν ᾗ τινὶ δὴ πόλει πλεῖστοι ἐπὶ τὸ αὐτὸ κατὰ ταὐτὰ τοῦτο λέγουσι τὸ ἐμόν καὶ τὸ οὐκ ἐμόν, αὕτη ἄριστα διοικεῖται; Πολύ γε. Καὶ ἥ τις δὴ ἐγγύτατα ἑνὸς ἀνθρώπου ἔχει, οἷον, ὅταν ποῦ ἡμῶν δάκτυλός του πληγῇ, πᾶσα ἡ κοινωνία ἡ κατὰ τὸ σῶμα πρὸς τὴν ψυχὴν τεταμένη εἰς μίαν σύνταξιν τὴν τοῦ ἄρχοντος ἐν αὐτῇ ἥσθετό τε καὶ πᾶσα ἅμα ξυνήλγησε μέρους πονή-

* Platon. Respub. l. iii. § 22.

σαντος ὅλη, καὶ οὕτω δὴ λέγομεν ὅτι ὁ ἄνθρωπος τὸν δάκτυλον ἀλγεῖ· καὶ περὶ ἄλλου ὁτουοῦν τῶν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ὁ αὐτὸς λόγος, περί τε λύπης πονοῦντος μέρους καὶ περὶ ἡδονῆς ῥαΐζοντος. Ὁ αὐτὸς γάρ, ἔφη· καὶ τοῦτο ὃ ἐρωτᾷς, τοῦ τοιούτου ἐγγύτατα ἡ ἄριστα πολιτευομένη πόλις οἰκεῖ. Ἑνὸς δή, οἶμαι, πάσχοντος τῶν πολιτῶν, ὁτιοῦν ἢ ἀγαθὸν ἢ κακὸν ἡ τοιαύτη πόλις μάλιστά τε φησει ἑαυτῆς εἶναι τὸ πάσχον, καὶ ἢ ξυνησθήσεται ἅπασα ἢ ξυλλυπήσεται. Ἀνάγκη, ἔφη, τήν γε εὔνομον.

Not daring to attempt a translation of this passage, I shall endeavour shortly to express its meaning. "There is no evil in a community so great, as that which disunites, and makes it several, instead of one; nor any good so great, as that which makes it one, instead of several. The means of effecting this unity, is so to regulate the component parts, that what is a cause of pleasure or pain to one or a few, shall be so to all, or as many as possible. On the contrary, when interests are disunited, so that from the same political events, one portion of the community derives pleasure, another pain, this state of things, by inevitable consequence, leads to the dissolution of states."

It is mortifying to find one's self under the necessity of vindicating the wisdom of ages, from the pitiful objections of a man who, finding it stated in some quarter which he disliked, that identity of interests with the community is the best security the community can have for the

good conduct of its rulers; gives out a proposition which has no bearing on the matter, and cries out, "*There!* I have demolished your best security: men sometimes mistake their true interest: therefore, the identity of the interests of the rulers with the interests of the community is not the best security for care of the interests of the community."

Well reasoned! Would it not be a still better connected conclusion to say, that individuals sometimes mistake their true interest; therefore, no individual should manage his own affairs, but every man those of some other?

Plato, seeing thus clearly the necessity of identifying the interests of the guardians, φυλακες, with the interests of the guarded, bent the whole force of his penetrating mind, to discover the means of effecting such identification; but being ignorant, as all the ancients were, of the divine principle of representation, found himself obliged to have recourse to extraordinary methods. He first of all prescribes a very artificial system of education for the class of guardians, φυλακες: a system of such vigilance, begun so early, and continued so long, as to make of them a very different sort of beings from the ordinary race of mortals, to make of them, in short, philosophers, Plato laying it down as a universal truth, that there can be no happiness for states, until either philosophers are the rulers, or the rulers philosophers. In the next

place, in order to prevent the existence of any private interest militating against that of the community, in the breasts of the guardians, he thought it necessary that they (he did not say the rest of the people, that is a vulgar error), should have nothing belonging to them individually, not even wives and children. This system of means, for the attainment of that identity of interests between the guardians and the guarded, on which good guardianship depends, has been the subject of much ignorant ridicule; but if the principle of representation, unknown to Plato, be excluded, it will not be easy to find another combination of means better adapted to the end; and surely that end is of sufficient importance to render it expedient to employ the most extraordinary means for its attainment, if other and simpler means are not to be found. Besides, Plato had an example of something nearly as extraordinary as the means he proposed, actually before his eyes, at Sparta. And the inhabitants of modern Europe have had examples of something still more extraordinary in the whole set of monastic institutions; above all that of the Jesuits.

Aristotle lays down the same doctrine; but, as his manner is, in a more abstract way; where he treats of ends, τελη, in the most comprehensive sense.

It is illustrated also, at great length, and with great beauty, in many parts of the writings of

Xenophon. It is the great theme of two of his most exquisite and instructive productions, his Institution of Cyrus, and his Economics; and is touched upon with great effect in some of the dialogues in the Memoirs of Socrates.

Mr. Mill, it is necessary to observe, confines his inquiry to one department of government. The only thing he takes in hand, is, to shew, by what means good legislation can be effected. He certainly took it for granted, not having duly fathomed the intellects of such men as Sir James, that it was necessary for this end to establish an identity of interests between the community and those to whom they intrust the power of legislating for them.

And next he found, that the same means precisely which produce a true representation; that is, a body of representatives, the real, and not the pretended, choice of the people; produce most happily, indeed wonderfully, the identity of interest, on which good legislation depends; and that exactly in proportion as the system of representation falls short of this perfection, it fails in producing that effect. No wonder, that the class who were permitted to rule, without that identity of interests, in other words, to misrule, were very angry at hearing this doctrine; and that they who sought their favour were eager to signalize themselves by reviling both the doctrine and its author.

Let the vehicles of aristocratical opinions, and of the advocation of aristocratical interests in England, for the last fifty years, be consulted; it will be found with what perseverance the necessity of that identification has been reprobated. It will also be found, what wrath has been poured upon those who maintained its importance. They would not repose confidence in public men. That was the complaint. The not reposing confidence in public men, is another name for requiring that their interests should be identified with the interests of those whom they govern. And the confidence itself is another name for scope to misrule. The author of Hudibras said well; all that the knave stands in need of is to be trusted; after that, his business does itself. Sir James stood in the first rank of those who called out for confidence in public men, and poured contumely on those who sought the identity of interests.

The words in which Sir James has unfolded his sapience would afford the reader some sport. But the work is getting bulky; and I shall only notice an expression or two, which contain something like new matter of accusation.

Sir James gives us his opinion about two things; one of which he says is right, the other wrong; and the wrong he lays to the charge of Mr. Mill. But Mr. Mill has no concern with either. Sir James's wrong thing may be either

wrong or right, his right thing may be either right or wrong; and Mr. Mill's reasoning stands unaffected in either case.

It is a wrong thing, he says, to attempt to explain the immense variety of political facts, by the simple element of a contest of interests.

Be it so, to please Sir James; but Mr. Mill has not sought to explain the immense variety of political facts at all. All that Mr. Mill attempted was, to shew how a community could obtain the best security for good legislation; and that he said, was, by establishing, as far as possible, an identity of interests between the law-makers and themselves.

Does Sir James dispute that position?

Sir James's bad thing we have thus seen. His good thing is, to refer the immense variety of political facts (these are surely all the facts of history) to that variety of passions, habits, opinions and prejudices, which we discover only by experience. Sir James's enumeration, far as he thinks it goes beyond Mr. Mill, is by no means complete. Sir James, for example, does not include reason among the principles in human nature, which account for historical facts. I, on the contrary, am of opinion, and I have no doubt that Mr. Mill is with me, that the whole nature of man must be taken into account, for explaining the "immense variety" of historical facts.

But between this proposition, that the whole

of human nature is to be taken into account, in explaining the immense variety of historical facts: and this other proposition, that the best security for good government is found in the identity of interest between the governors and the governed, did Sir James perceive any contrariety?

The European public has been a good deal occupied of late, in discussing the fact, and considering the reasons, of the decline of the Physical Sciences in England. The degraded state of the moral sciences is a thing still more lamentable. Of our sad condition in this respect, the work of Sir James is a monument. Any thing so discreditable to the literature of England, as such a book, allowed to pretend to the highest honors, in its highest department, is new in its history.

This first of the instances adduced by Sir James to prove that the advocates of utility philosophize in the wrong way, turns out, therefore, to be an instance of philosophizing in the right way. We shall easily shew that the same is the case with his second instance, the Treatise on Education.

To do justice to Sir James's words, they must be quoted; and for easier reference I shall number the sentences.

"1. Mr. Mill's Essay on Education, affords another example of the inconvenience of leaping at once from the most general laws, to a multiplicity of minute appearances. 2. Having as-

sumed, or at least inferred from insufficient premises, that the intellectual and moral character is entirely formed by circumstances, he proceeds, in the latter part of the essay, as if it were a necessary consequence of that doctrine, that we might easily acquire the power of combining and directing circumstances in such a manner as to produce the best possible character. 3. Without disputing for the present the theoretical proposition, let us consider what would be the reasonableness of similar expectations in a more easily intelligible case. 4. The general theory of the winds is pretty well understood; we know that they proceed from the rushing of air from these portions of the atmosphere which are more condensed, into those which are more rarefied; but how great a chasm is there between that simple law and the great variety of facts which experience teaches us respecting winds! The constant winds between the tropics are large and regular enough to be in some measure capable of explanation; but who can tell why, in variable climates, the wind blows to-day from the east, to-morrow from the west? Who can foretell what its shiftings and variations are to be? Who can account for a tempest on one day, and a calm on another? Even if we could foretell the irregular and infinite variations, how far might we not still be from the power of combining and guiding their causes? 5. No man but the lunatic in the story of Rasselas ever

dreamt that he could command the weather. The difficulty plainly consists in the multiplicity and minuteness of the circumstances which act on the atmosphere. Are those which influence the formation of the human character likely to be less minute and multiplied?"

1. Sir James says, he produces "another" example of "the leaping from general laws to a multiplicity of minute appearances." He had produced no example of this saltation before. This "another" is therefore another instance of the mode in which Sir James draws upon the credulity of his reader. Mr. Mill's Essay on Government, in shewing that what makes a representative body to be the real choice of the people produces also an identity of interests between that body and the people, does not leap from the most general laws to a multiplicity of minute particulars.

But, good God! what language is this? Did Sir James not know that the business of philosophy consists of two great functions; 1, from the examination of particulars to ascend to general laws; 2, from the knowledge of general laws, to descend to particulars: that is, if we use the fine language of Sir James, it consists of two leaps; 1, from particulars to generals; 2, from generals to particulars. Sir James parades the philosophy of Bacon; and yet so little knows he wherein it consists, that he marks out a case of the strictest

adherence to the precepts of Bacon, as a departure from the true mode of philosophizing.

2. " Having assumed that the intellectual and moral character is entirely formed by circumstances." Sir James should have informed us, what in this phrase he means by " circumstances." " Formed by circumstances " appears to mean *formed by something.* Does Sir James accuse Mr. Mill of error, in saying that the intellectual and moral character is *formed by something?* If so, I doubt not that Mr. Mill will very readily plead guilty to the charge; and to this further charge, of saying that we ought most carefully to inquire what that something is. In truth, Mr. Mill's object is to shew, that a perfect work on Education would do two things; 1, it would ascertain what the means are of forming the intellectual and moral character; 2, it would give rules for the best application of them to that end.

Well; Mr. Mill having presumed to think, that the intellectual and moral character is *formed by something;* in which Sir James takes the liberty modestly to differ from him; " proceeds, as if it were a necessary consequence of that doctrine, that we might easily acquire the power of combining and directing circumstances in such a manner as to produce the best possible character." Oh! no. There it pleased Sir James entirely to mistake the matter. Mr. Mill represents the best possible education as a very diffi-

cult, not a very easy thing. But he says that we may, and that we ought, with our utmost endeavour, to make the best possible use of the means we possess toward the formation of good intellectual and moral characters; and that the difference between the intellectual and moral characters formed by the worst and the best education is immense.

That is the matter of fact, very different, it appears, from that which it was the purpose of Sir James to make people believe.

3. We may pass the third sentence without any remark.

4. This goes beyond driveling. It is more of the nature of raving. Because we can do nothing to produce winds, though we know the causes of winds; does Sir James desire us to conclude, that we can do nothing towards the producing of good intellectual and moral characters? As well might he infer that we can do nothing towards the making of a good shoe. The reason why we can do nothing toward the making of winds, is, because we have no power over the causes of winds; the reason why we can do a great deal towards the formation of the intellectual and moral character, is, because we have great power over the means of that formation. Mercy on us! And Sir James did take these two cases for parallels!

The reason why we can predict the winds, as

little nearly as we can act upon them, is, that we know little or nothing of the order in which the causes of them take place. But we know a great deal about the order of the causes which operate to the formation of a good character.

5. This is the last sentence of Sir James's well-considered and well-meant attack upon the supporters of the principle of utility with which we shall trouble the reader.

Does Sir James, then, mean to give it out, that when the causes which co-operate to any effect are "minute and multiplied," it would be absurd to attempt to reduce them to order, or to frame rules for the direction of them to the attainment of the effects which we desire?

If so, he is not worth thinking of for a moment. If he only means to give us the information, that many and minute circumstances do operate to the formation of character, nobody needed that information at his hands, at any rate not Mr. Mill, who has made a more comprehensive enumeration of those circumstances than any preceding writer.

Does Sir James not know many instances, beside that of Education, in which, though circumstances be minute and multiplied, we obtain a very complete command over them? The circumstances are minute, and multiplied, which influence the course of a ship, from the Thames to the Ganges; but we have obtained such a com-

mand over them, as generally to insure a particular event. And here we may remark that even Sir James's intractable winds, are rendered the instrument of this steady result.

The circumstances are minute, and multiplied to an infinite degree, which contribute to the supply of London, or any other great city, with the necessaries and luxuries which it consumes; yet we can trace them all, to the one principle in human nature which produces that supply with invariable constancy, and measures it with almost incredible precision.

Surely we have no occasion to give more instances. And surely we may affirm, that never, since philosophy began, was matter like this given to the world for philosophy before.

SECTION V.

Sir James on "Ethical Theory."

THE view of Sir James is not complete, until, after having seen him at work on other men's doctrines, we see him at work also on his own.

He makes delivery of what he denominates his ethical theory, in his seventh, or concluding section, called "General Remarks."

For the reader's convenience I insert the whole passage, with the paragraphs numbered, in the Appendix.*

The first three of the said paragraphs offer nothing for remark. In the fourth, Sir James, with his usual skill, begins a dissertation which was little to his purpose.

It is introduced, by the notice of Brown's admission, that every act which is moral is also useful. Hereupon Sir James draws a conclusion. If this, says he, be true, then morality and utility should be considered reciprocally tests of each other.

Does this mean, that wherever we find morality

* Vide Appendix B.

in an act, it is a test or proof that there is also utility in it; and wherever we find utility in an act, it is also a test or proof that there is morality in it? This is not an *inference* from Brown's admission; it is sheer repetition; Brown's admission itself, only in obscure phrase. To say, that two things are always found together; and next, that where you find one of them, you will find the other, is merely to affirm the same thing twice; a very common method of inferring with Sir James.

Let us go on. According to this doctrine of Sir James, that morality and utility are reciprocally tests of each other, they are two separate things. The thing which tests is one thing; the thing which is tested is another.

Further; when any thing is to be used as a test, it must first be known; at least so far known, as to be distinguished from every other thing; else we never can tell when we have got it. Now, then, when morality is to be used as a test of utility, how are we to know that we have it? Sir James gave it us, as a sort of discovery, long ago, that one out of the two grand objects of moral philosophy was, to tell us what morality is. Sir James has not any where yet told us what it is, nor attempted to do so. He is therefore premature in instructing us to use it as a test.

Sir James, however, does one thing here. He

contradicts the theory of utility. The theory of utility makes the utility of an act, and the morality of an act, two names for the same thing. Sir James says they are two things; which reciprocally test one another. Well, then, what we have vehement occasion to know is, what is the morality of an act, distinct from the utility of it? What is it, in, and by itself, consisting purely of its own elements?

This talk about testing morality is away from the purpose. It is pure trifling. We do not want to know what is an indication of the presence of morality. We want to know what morality is.

Sir James, however, thinks we have not yet got talk enough about the tests; he therefore gives us more, and of a truly curious kind. "It is hard," he says, "to say why morality and utility should not be reciprocally tests of each other, though in a very different way." This "different way," one would suppose to mean, that morality tests utility in one way, and utility tests morality in another way, and that the difference between the two ways is great. Well, one looks forward after this, with some curiosity, to see how morality does its testing work on utility, and how utility does its testing work on morality. Sir James talks as follows; "Morality and utility reciprocally test one another, in a very different way; the virtuous feelings, fitted as they are by

immediate appearance, by quick and powerful action, being sufficient tests of morality in the moment of action; while the consideration of tendency to general happiness, a more obscure and slowly discoverable quality, should be applied in general reasoning, as a test of the sentiments and dispositions themselves."

Remark, first, that Sir James, by telling us that the virtuous feelings are the test of morality, informs us that they are not morality. This needs to be remembered. But, as he was to inform us how morality tests utility in one way, and how utility tests morality in another way, what had we to do, in this explanation, with the introduction of another test, which is neither the one nor the other?

Sir James ought to have explained two things: 1st, how morality was tested; 2ndly, how utility was tested; they being tested, as he says, by one another, but in a different way. Sir James has given us his account of the testing of morality; but has not said a word about the reciprocal testing of utility. He also now changes his account of the testing of morality, having told us first, that it was tested by utility, but now telling us that it is tested by feelings, and only at an after stage by utility; by feelings in practice, by utility in speculation.

This is a curious doctrine, this of the double test; one for action, and one for speculation.

Sir James was ambitious of being a discoverer in moral science. Here he has succeeded. Assuredly, no man ever thought of testing in this fashion before.

When a man acts from feeling, he acts from the strongest propensity. This is so strictly true, that the one term is but a substitute for the other. But among actions, when it is the feeling that selects, it is the strongest propensity that selects; in other words, tests the eligibility, *i.e.* the morality of the act, in the moment of action. This is as much as to say, that whatever a man, in the moment of action, feels himself most inclined to do, he does rightly, for his impulse is the test. In short, it is impossible for him to do wrong. And this is the sort of morality which all must come to, who make feelings their guide. We shall find other occasions of seeing how necessarily the morality of Sir James fixes itself at this standard.

It is true, that Sir James uses the expression "virtuous feelings." But what does the word "virtuous" avail him, while he leaves us uninformed what the virtuous feelings are? Again, what is the difference between one feeling and another, but that one sort impels us more frequently to good actions, another sort more frequently to bad; not that any sort may not carry us to any act, even the most atrocious? This we have already seen so clearly, that there is no

need of adding to the illustration of it. It is therefore undeniably true, that following Sir James's virtuous feelings, as the test of the morality of his acts, a man might feel justified in the perpetration of any, the foulest, act that ever disgraced humanity.

So much for Sir James's test in the moment of action. We must now consider what he has to say about the speculative test.

That, he tells us, is utility. He tells us, also, how it is to be used. It is to be applied "in general reasoning." And it is to be applied "as a test of the sentiments and dispositions themselves."

A quantity of time must always be spent upon Sir James's mouthings, in order to get any thing definite which we can speak about.

We must here suppose that what he calls "the sentiments and dispositions themselves," are "the virtuous feelings" he had just talked about—the tests in action.

But what is it, to test a virtuous feeling?

That is by no means clear. Is it, to find out whether it is virtuous or not?

Further, in finding out whether a "virtuous feeling" is virtuous or not, by the test of utility, what is it we do? Judge, whether it is useful or not? And in judging whether it is useful or not, do we not judge whether it produces useful actions or not? Is that feeling virtuous which

produces useful actions; the contrary, the contrary?

Well, then; would Sir James have called any feeling virtuous, at the time when it was producing vicious acts? There is no feeling of which more can be predicated, than that it commonly impels us in the right direction; none of which it cannot be predicated, that it does often impel in the wrong. Is it to be followed, when it impels in the wrong? If not, then comes another question; how are we to know whether it is impelling us in the right direction or the wrong? Is there any other mode than asking, whether the action to which it urges, is good or bad? And is it not good, or bad, according as it is useful, or hurtful? But, if so, the test of utility is indispensable, even in the moment of action, notwithstanding Sir James's "virtuous feelings," and notwithstanding the unspeakable nonsense about them, with which he has deluged us. What end it is calculated to serve in speculation, we have still to inquire.

Sir James tells us, that to this end it is to be applied, "in general reasoning," to test the virtuous feelings. I do not suppose that Sir James means "general reasoning" to be here taken in its proper sense; for that is syllogizing. I suppose that he means it in the sense of general inquiry, investigation; philosophizing, in short; whether performed by analysis or synthesis, syllogism or induction.

Well, then, in our speculative hours, and doings, we may have recourse to utility. We may test by it the virtuous feelings. That is all the use which in Sir James's ethical system is to be made of utility. And what is it that a man, as he speculates, does, when he tests the virtuous feelings by utility? It does not appear that Sir James ever put to himself that question. And all the answer I can make for him is, that the man asks himself whether they are useful or not?

Now, if a man of sense puts to himself that question, it is very evident what answer he will return. He will say that, certainly, there is a considerable list of "feelings," called also "sentiments and dispositions," by Sir James, which are useful; and the most useful of them all is self-love; because on that the very being of the species depends. But when all this is done, are we advanced one step in our inquiry? What have we done, either to determine what morality is, in the abstract; or what is to guide us in practice? Self-love, we know, though it moves us to many useful acts, moves us also to hurtful ones. The same is the case with social love, in all its branches but the highest.

Quitting the use of utility as a test, he goes on, in his sixth paragraph, to tell us two things more about it. He gives us what he calls "a clear, short, and unanswerable proof, that beneficial tendency is an essential quality of virtue."

Virtue must be taken here in the same sense with morality. Then why quit the more precise word of the two? Let us try the predication upon morality; *utility is a quality of morality.* This, we see at once, will not do. Morality itself is a quality; but a quality of a quality is nonsense.

2. He further tells us, that "religion cannot subsist without a belief in benevolence as the sole principle of Divine government; that therefore God acts upon the principle of utility; but it is not a fit principle for man; because man is not all-perfect." But why should not an imperfect, as well as a perfect being, act upon the principle of utility? Why should he not do all the good he can?

It will now be convenient to see what all this amounts to.

We have been told of something which is a test of morality:

Of something which is a quality of morality:

Of something which is a good motive to morality, in the narrow sphere; not good in the enlarged.

But to tell us of a test of morality, and of a quality of morality, and of a motive to morality, which is both good, and not good, is not to tell us what morality is; nor any approach to it.

We are also told something about utility; that it is a test of morality, which is as much as to say something different from morality; that it is

a quality of morality, which is as much as to say, not morality, but something belonging to it; that it is the principle of action in the Deity, but not fit to be the principle of action in man.

Thus far Sir James has not spoken to his question, what makes an act to be moral; but has evaded it. This, however, does not hinder him from proceeding with assurance to make discoveries about moral acts, which are truly his own.

"Every moral act must be considered as an end."

Of ends there are two kinds; the intermediate, and the ultimate. And of these the intermediate are only means towards a farther end. They are not good in themselves; they are good only as contributing to the attainment of something which is good.

Now, in which of these two classes of ends did Sir James reckon moral acts? Not certainly in that of ultimate ends. The only thing which is of value in an act is its consequences. The act itself, the muscular contraction, is indifferent, or painful, for the most part. Acts are performed, not for their own sake, but for the sake of their consequences. A voluntary act has no other meaning than that it is an act performed as the means to an end.

But if moral acts cannot be classed among ultimate ends; they must, if at all classed as

ends, be classed among those which are secondary, or intermediate; that is, which are means to some farther end.

Now, then, what is the farther end, to which moral acts are the means? On this subject, Sir James is silent as the grave. But this, it is evident, is the very point which he was called upon to determine.

In the paragraphs from the 7th to the 10th inclusive, Sir James puts and answers this question—"Why, if tendency to general welfare be the standard of virtue, is it not always present to the contemplation of every man who does or prefers a virtuous action? Must not utility in that case be *the felt essence of virtue?* Why are other ends, besides general happiness, fit to be pursued?"

Sir James replies:—"These questions, which are all founded on that confusion of the theory of actions with the theory of sentiments, against which the reader was so early warned, might be discussed with no more than a reference to that distinction." Sir James's reference is to a passage in the first section of his Dissertation, of which we have already given the reader an account; where he tells us, that Mr. Bentham, with some other philosophers, take the moral qualities of acts, and the approbation bestowed upon them, for the same thing. No man, with exception of himself, ever did commit any such blunder. That

the present questions imply that confusion, Sir James is probably the only man in the world that would have affirmed. Dr. Brown says, for it is his objection which Sir James is dealing with, that if utility was the quality in acts to which moral approbation relates, the idea of that utility would be present to us in every act of moral approbation. But it is not so present. Therefore, &c. It is very evident that this objection not only does not imply the absurd supposition, that the approbation, and the thing approved, are one and the same thing; but that it actually proceeds upon the supposition that they are different.

Sir James expounds himself in the following words:—

"By those advocates of utility, indeed, who hold it to be a necessary part of their system, that some glimpse, at least, of tendency to personal or general well-being, is an essential part of the motives which render an action virtuous, these questions cannot be satisfactorily answered. Against such they are arguments of irresistible force; but against the doctrine itself, rightly understood, and justly bounded, they are altogether powerless. The reason why there may, and must be, many ends morally more fit to be pursued in practice than general happiness, is plainly to be found in the limited capacity of man. A perfectly good being, who foresees and commands all the consequences of action, cannot indeed be

conceived by us to have any other end in view than general well-being. Why evil exists under that perfect government, is a question towards the solution of which, the human understanding can scarcely advance a single step. But all who hold the evil to exist only for good, and own their inability to explain why or how, are perfectly exempt from any charge of inconsistency in their obedience to the dictates of their moral nature. The measure of the faculties of man renders it absolutely necessary for him to have many other practical ends; the pursuit of all of which is moral, when it actually tends to general happiness, though that last end never entered into the contemplation of the agent. It is impossible for us to calculate the effects of a single action, any more than the chances of a single life. But let it not be hastily concluded, that the calculation of consequences is impossible in moral subjects. To calculate the tendency of every sort of human action, is a possible, easy, and common operation. The general good effects of temperance, prudence, fortitude, justice, benevolence, gratitude, veracity, fidelity,—of the affections of kindred, and of love for our country,—are the subjects of calculations which, taken as generalities, are absolutely unerring. They are founded on a larger and firmer basis of more uniform experience, than any of those ordinary calculations which govern prudent men in the whole

business of life. An appeal to these daily and familiar transactions furnishes at once a decisive answer, both to those advocates of utility who represent the consideration of it as a necessary ingredient in virtuous motives, as well as moral approbation, and to those opponents who turn the unwarrantable inferences of unskilful advocates into proofs of the absurdity into which the doctrine leads."

" Those advocates.... glimpse of tendency.... part of motives," &c. This is the self-same puddle, with which we have already found Sir James endeavouring to bespatter Mr. Bentham, and those whom he will have to be Mr. Bentham's followers. Sir James, however, shews a grievous ignorance of those quacks and their quackery, *alias*, those philosophers and their philosophy, when he supposes they would be at any loss for an answer to Dr. Brown. Brown was but poorly read in the doctrine of association. Had he known it better he would have easily answered himself. It is no rare thing, in the higher cases of complex association, for an ingredient, and a main ingredient, to be concealed by the closeness of its union with the compound. Nor does it follow, that the general idea of utility is not present to the mind in moral approbation, because Dr. Brown was unable to trace it. Before the discovery of Berkeley, he would have been equally insensible of the presence of ideas of touch in

the perception of figure and magnitude by the eye.

This paragraph, however, deserves more notice. It brings certain charges against the advocates of utility; and it presents a theological dissertation on the existence of evil.

The charges brought against the advocates of utility are two.

First, they maintain, that some consideration of utility "is an essential part of the motives which render an action virtuous."

Secondly, they maintain, that a moral act can have no end but general utility.

As these charges are repetition, the answer to them has been already given. It will only, therefore, be necessary to recall to the reader what he already knows.

The first of the charges, as the reader will immediately recognise, is wholly untrue. The teachers of utility do not think that the consideration of utility is required *in* the motives of virtuous acts. The place for that consideration according to them is not the motive, but the *intention* of the agent; a part of the mental procedure, which it would seem Sir James had never adverted to.

Sir James has also another assertion here, which will be scorned by every man who has any knowledge of the philosophy of the human mind. He says, it is the motives which make an action

to be virtuous. The virtue does not depend upon the motive. There is no bad motive. Every motive is the desire of good; to the agent himself, or some one else.

The second charge; that the teachers of the principle of utility, regard utility as the only end of a virtuous act, is founded upon ignorance of the meaning of the word end; profound ignorance, it must be admitted. The end of an act is synonymous with the motive. The end, something which is to be gained by the act, is that which moves to the act. This charge is therefore disposed of, in what we have replied to the first. The teachers of utility never considered utility as the end of every moral act.

Sir James's reasons are commonly diverting things. The reason why the teachers of utility are wrong in doing what they never did is, that utility is *unfit* to be the end of such a being as man. One would think that the fact might have contented Sir James. The fact is, that men perform moral acts with other ends. But Sir James having assigned unfitness, finds it necessary to prove the unfitness, and the reason of it is, that man is a limited being. But this is no reason at all. Why should not a being, as limited as man, have had as his only motive to the performance of good acts, the good which redounds from them? No other reason can be assigned for his being made otherwise, but the will of that Being who

did make him. Sir James says, that a limited being knows not all the consequences of his acts. But this is nothing to the purpose; he might still follow his end with the benefit of all the lights he might have.

Though Sir James had told us before, as a fundamental part of his doctrine, that man cannot calculate the consequences of acts; he now tells us not to believe him. "Let it not," he says, "be hastily concluded, that the calculation of consequences is impossible, in moral subjects." And then he says, that the general tendency of the acts of a class is correctly understood by every body. But is not this all which is required? Is not that a perfect answer, given by Sir James himself, to all his spoutings against the principle of utility, because it is troublesome to calculate? Can the man, who takes utility as his rule, do any thing better, than go upon the general tendencies of acts, where he does not foresee some unusual consequence? A man takes food, knowing the general tendency to be good. He only abstains, when he has some reason for expecting a different from the ordinary consequence. The rule is the same in the case of moral acts.

Sir James's theological intrusion is only worth noticing, in a place where it has so little business to be found, for the curiosity of the sort.

It amounts to this, that the men who believe that the evil found in this world exists for good,

though they cannot tell in what manner, are not inconsistent in acting morally. It is utterly impossible to conceive what could induce a man to put down such a combination of words. Why should not we act morally, though there are many things which we cannot account for; this—the existence of evil in a world constituted by perfect goodness, with the rest?

Sir James hardly writes a sentence in which there is not some blunder of expression. He says, that men, though they cannot account for the existence of evil, are not inconsistent in obeying "the dictates of their moral nature." Man's nature is immoral, as well as moral. Has he then two natures? There is a large sect, indeed, who think that his nature is altogether immoral; "conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity." Sir James meant to say, "the moral dictates of his nature;" and did not know how to express himself.

Sir James says, "the measure" (limited) "of the faculties of man renders it absolutely necessary for him to have many other practical ends:" (than general utility)—"the pursuit of all which is moral, when it actually tends to general happiness, though that last had never entered into the contemplation of the agent."

"The pursuit of all of them is moral, when it actually tends to general happiness." Granted. "Though that last had never entered into the

contemplation of the agent." At this we demur.

First of all, how is the agent to know that this pursuit of his, "actually tends to the general happiness," if it never enters into his contemplation? Here would seem to be a limit to a man's obedience to his virtuous affections. But if it is one which he need not have in his contemplation, it is one which he need not apply. A limit which need not be applied, is no limit at all. The consequence of this doctrine is, that simple obedience to the virtuous (*alias*, unknown) affections, is simply and absolutely virtue.

Next, if a man can be moral without any regard to utility, obeying simply one of the blind impulses of his nature, Sir James should have explained to us, why the beasts should not be deemed moral agents? Upon this theory, they have all the requisites.

Farther, Sir James ought to have told us, what check a man, acting from the impulse of his affection, without a thought of the utility of his acts, can feel, in perpetrating the greatest crimes for the benefit of his child or his friend? A moral parent, a moral friend, go so far and no farther, in operating the good either of themselves, or of the individuals whom they love to serve. At what limit do they stop? Where general utility bids them, sanctioned as it is by the approbation and disapprobation of mankind. But how

can they stop where general utility bids them, if they have it not present to their minds?

Thus far Sir James has been replying to Dr. Brown. Dr. Brown had refused to admit the principle of utility as the principle of morality, because man pursues other ends than general happiness. The meaning must be, that the pursuit of other ends than general happiness may be moral. This the assertors of utility never denied. Yet Sir James, in his wisdom, says, that the preachers of utility cannot reply to this objection. Why? Because they say, that there can be no motive but one to a moral act. And this they do not say.

Once more we are constrained to remark, that Sir James has not yet touched upon the question, what is morality. Here, however, he takes his leave of it. He now proceeds to the second part of his undertaking, that which he calls the "Theory of Sentiments," or the answer to the question, what is moral approbation and disapprobation?

Without the aid, then, of Sir James, we must place before ourselves a list of the requisites of a moral act; because it serves to clear the way for our future progress.

1. *The motive.* There is no act without a motive; but, the motive in itself is neither moral nor immoral.

2. *The volition.* There is no act which is not

willed; but the act of willing, is neither moral, nor immoral.

3. *What is called the external act;* to wit, *the bodily part or motion.* That, like the motive, is, in itself, neither moral nor immoral. The same bodily operation is indifferently a part of every sort of act. It is however a necessary part of every act.

4. *The consequences of the act.* An act which has no consequences that are materially either beneficial or hurtful, is not called a moral act. That alone receives this denomination, which has consequences material to some one or more human beings.

5. *The expectation of the beneficial consequences in the mind of the agent.* This hardly needs illustration, but take the following.

A man gives a drug to another, expecting it will poison him. The act is immoral, because the expected consequences are pernicious. The actual consequences were salutary: the drug proved a sovereign remedy for a mortal disease. Reverse the case, and the act would be moral, though the actual consequences fatal.

6. This is not all. It is not enough, to make an act moral, that the agent expects from it beneficial consequences to some body. It is farther necessary, *that he have no reason to expect from it, evil consequences equivalent,* to any other body: that is, in other words, that he have *a conviction of its general utility.*

All this is settled by universal consent; it is vain, therefore, to think of disputing it. And this being premised, it will be seen, that no act of the rudest agent, performed with the smallest time for reflection, is moral, without a conviction in his mind of its general utility, how little soever Dr. Brown was able to perceive the existence of that ingredient.

It is not possible to conceive any thing more ludicrous, than the airs with which Sir James presents himself on the stage, for the performance of his part, in this the second act of his piece. He decides, as if it were a thought for which the world is indebted to him, that association must account for the moral sentiments: he next announces, that to make out the exposition, the task reserved for him, demanded miraculous powers; but arduous as it was, he was endowed with a courage equal to the enterprise, and was possessed of modesty withal; for he did not promise to complete the analysis; all he should absolutely promise was, to give an *outline*, which would shew what might be done.

Reader, if you are acquainted with the state of the facts, you need a little time to compose your countenance. The vast undertaking which Sir James was thus announcing, with the sound mouth, and about to set upon, with the spirit of a Samson, was a finished job. The thing was done.

Dr. Hartley carried on the important investigation a certain way. He, after the Rev. Mr. Gay, propounded the opinion, that association would account for all the complex phenomena of the human mind; and performed by means of it the analysis of some very important cases. With respect to the moral sentiments, he proceeded only so far as to render it probable that they might be strictly accounted for by association. And even Mr. Belsham, though not a metaphysician of much power, clearly understood the scope of Dr. Hartley's investigation, and added some useful reflections.

Mr. Mill took up the subject where they left it, and prosecuted the inquiry to its end. He traced minutely the complex phenomena of moral approbation and disapprobation to simple ideas; and shewed what simple ideas, combined by association, constitute the phenomena.

This being the matter of fact, not to be disputed, or evaded, I question whether a parallel to the following passage can be produced from the records of literature.

Sir James, having introduced the subject, by seeking an answer to the question why, if moral approbation respects only the utility of voluntary acts, is it confined to that species of utility; and having alleged that it is not a sufficient answer to say, that the application of moral approbation is limited by its end, the affording a motive to

beneficial acts,—goes on, in the eleventh of the paragraphs, as follows:—

"To seek a foundation for universal, ardent, early, and immediate feelings, in processes of an intellectual nature, has, since the origin of philosophy, been the grand error of ethical inquirers into human nature. To seek for such a foundation in association, an early and insensible process, which confessedly mingles itself with our first and simplest feelings, and which is common to both parts of our nature, is not liable to the same animadversions. If conscience be uniformly produced by the regular and harmonious co-operation of many processes of associations, the objection is in reality a challenge to produce a complete theory of it, founded on that principle, by exhibiting such a full account of all these processes as may satisfactorily explain why it proceeds thus far and no farther. This would be a very arduous attempt, and perhaps it may be premature. But something may be more modestly tried towards an *outline*, which, though it might leave many particulars unexplained, may justify a reasonable expectation that they are not incapable of explanation; and may even now assign such reasons for the limitation of approbation to voluntary acts, as may convert the objection derived from that fact into a corroboration of the doctrines to which it has been opposed as an insurmountable difficulty. Such an attempt will naturally lead

to the close of the present Dissertation. The attempt has indeed been already made, but not without great apprehensions, on the part of the author, that he has not been clear enough, especially in those parts which appeared to himself to owe most to his own reflection. He will now endeavour, at the expense of some repetition, to be more satisfactory."

The very first sentence of this passage is damning. Sir James says, it is rational to seek the origin of the moral sentiments in "association," but irrational to seek it in "intellectual processes."

Did Sir James suppose that "intellectual processes" are not association?

Association is "a process, which mingles itself with the composition of our first and simplest feelings." Could any man have written this, who knew any thing about association? or any thing else which the mind consists of?

Association is the term, by which we express the fact, that one of our ideas is followed by another, according to certain laws; and that two or more of them may be so drawn together as to form what we call a complex idea.

"Our first and simplest feelings." These most assuredly are, 1st, our sensations; 2dly, our simple ideas, the copies of those sensations. There is no composition in those feelings. What was in the head of Sir James when he could talk of

the composition of a simple sensation, the composition of a simple idea? the composition of things which are not compounded!

Let us suppose that he did not mean sensations and simple ideas (in fact he did not know what he meant), but the simplest of our compound ideas; and then let us see if he has more wisdom in his talk.

The composition of compound ideas is the association of the simple ideas. Association and composition are here two names for the same thing. Now listen to Sir James. The "association of ideas is a process which mingles itself with the composition of ideas." In other words, association is a process which mingles itself with itself. Seeing is a process which mingles itself with sight. Good God!

I shall pass over a long passage which seems to be inserted chiefly for the purpose of shewing, that Sir James is acquainted with what it is not very easy not to be acquainted with, Newton's rules of philosophizing; with which rules, Sir James takes great pains to inform us, it is not inconsistent (did any body ever dream it was?) to endeavour to account for the phenomena of the human mind on the principle of association; where, also, he touches upon a point, which is a favourite with him, the disinterestedness of human nature. Dugald Stewart and Dr. Brown had objected to the account which has been

given of the social affections, as derived from organic pleasures by association; alleging that this account established the selfishness of human nature. Sir James says, no; the affections, though composed of selfish ingredients, are themselves social, and not selfish.

Take notice, that, thus far, Sir James has only been announcing his purpose. He says now, "If conscience be uniformly produced by the regular and harmonious co-operation of many processes of association, the objection" (that it does not extend to utility in all its modes) "is in reality a challenge to produce a complete theory of it, founded on that principle, by exhibiting such a full account of all these processes as may satisfactorily explain why it proceeds thus far and no farther." And then follows Sir James's Pindaric on the heroism and modesty of him, who undertakes to furnish us with this "complete theory."

What the words are remarkable for, is, the farther evidence they afford of Sir James's ignorance of association; which he is going, nevertheless, with the air of a master, of *the* master, the top master, to apply to the formation of "a complete theory of conscience."

He says, "conscience is produced by the regular and harmonious co-operation of many processes of association." This is strange. An act of moral approbation is one process, not many

processes. A process of association is the joining one idea to another, and then a third to the two; a fourth to the three, and so on, till the combination is entire. What did Sir James think he meant by the co-operation of these processes? He had, as usual, no meaning at all; he had only words; but he had some experience that they answered his purpose.

Sir James proceeds to the exhibition of these processes.

We must have his words before us. Words are the soul of Sir James.

Those he gives us on this occasion occupy the 16th paragraph, the sentences of which, to facilitate reference, I shall mark by numbers.

"1. When the social affections are thus formed, they are naturally followed, in every instance, by the will to do whatever can promote their object. 2. Compassion excites a voluntary determination to do whatever relieves the person pitied. 3. The like process must occur in every case of gratitude, generosity, and affection. 4. Nothing so uniformly follows the kind disposition as the act of will, because it is the only means by which the benevolent desire can be gratified. 5. The result of what Brown justly calls, 'a finer analysis,' shews a mental contiguity of the affection to the volition to be much closer than appears on a coarser examination of this part of our nature 6. No wonder, then, that the strongest associa-

tion, the most active power of reciprocal suggestion, should subsist between them. 7. As all the affections are delightful, so the volitions, voluntary acts which are the only means of their gratification, become agreeable objects of contemplation to the mind. 8. The habitual disposition to perform them is felt in ourselves, and observed in others with satisfaction. 9. As these feelings become more lively, the absence of them may be viewed in ourselves with a pain, in others with an alienation capable of indefinite increase. 10. They become entirely independent sentiments; still, however, receiving constant supplies of nourishment from their parent affections, which, in well-balanced minds, reciprocally strengthen one another; unlike the unkind passions, which are constantly engaged in the most angry conflicts of civil war. 11. In this state we desire to experience these *beneficent volitions*, to cultivate a disposition towards them, and to do every correspondent voluntary act. 12. They are for their own sake the objects of desire. 13. They thus constitute a large portion of those emotions, desires, and affections, which regard certain dispositions of the mind and determinations of the will, as their sole and ultimate end. 14. These are what are called the moral sense, the moral sentiments, or best, though most simply, by the ancient name of *Conscience*; which has the merit, in our language, of being applied

to no other purpose, which peculiarly marks the strong working of these feelings on conduct, and which, from its solemn and sacred character, is well adapted to denote the venerable authority of the highest principle of human nature."

As this passage contains the essence of Sir James's cogitations, it is matter of necessity to be particular with it, painful though it be to tax the reader's patience with so many repetitions of elementary truths, and so much scrutiny of words, only to give a precious specimen of what is done by a man, when he is making a desperate effort to appear learned on a subject of which he knows nothing.

Sir James gives us a mess of ingredients of which to compound moral approbation. We have the social affections; the volitions they produce; reciprocal suggestion between the two; the mind's agreeable contemplation of such volitions, and voluntary acts; the satisfaction with which the disposition to perform such volitions and acts is felt and observed; the pain with which the absence of them is felt and observed; the desire to experience beneficent volitions, to cultivate the dispositions, and perform the acts, together with emotions, desires, and affections, the end of which is benevolent volitions and dispositions.

There are three things here which it is necessary to disentangle, for they are jumbled together

by Sir James, in a confusion which is marvellous; viz., the sentiments which precede the act; the act itself; and the sentiments which follow the act. The first six of the sentences relate to the sentiments which precede the act. The seventh, eighth, and ninth, relate to those which follow it. The tenth is obscure, but seems to revert to the sentiments which precede the act. The eleventh comes back to the sentiments which follow the act. The twelfth is a proposition which refers to the sentiments which precede the act, with the act following. The thirteenth relates to the sentiments which precede the act. And the fourteenth relates to those which follow it.

Let us endeavour to make out the propositions which he delivers in regard to each: and first, in regard to the sentiments which precede the act.

1. The social affections are the sentiments which precede volitions. 2. They are followed by volitions. 3. The volitions become independent sentiments; though they receive continual nourishment from their parent affections. 4. The sentiments which precede the acts are for their own sakes the objects of desire; as is also the act. 5. They constitute the sentiments which follow the acts.

Let us next enumerate the propositions he gives us with respect to the sentiments which follow; the only question which at present he had any thing to do with.

1. We contemplate the sentiments which precede the acts with pleasure; the want of them with pain. 2. By this pleasurable contemplation we desire the sentiments which precede the acts, and also the acts. 3. This desire is a desire of them for their own sakes. 4. The sentiments which follow the act are constituted by the sentiments which precede it.

And this is the account which Sir James gives of moral approbation and disapprobation.

The detail is as follows:—

Sentence 1st. "When the social affections are thus formed;" formed as he had told us in the 13th paragraph, "by the transfer of a small number of pleasures, perhaps organic, by the law of association, to a vast variety of new objects," (a very blundering expression of a fact which had been clearly expounded by Mr. Mill,) "they are followed by the will to do whatever can promote their object." The object of a man's conjugal affection is his wife. Sir James's declaration then is, that the husband, in consequence of his affection, wills to promote his wife.

Sir James here confounds affection with desire, as formerly he confounded motive with intention. A man's affection for one of his fellow creatures involves the desire of doing him good, and that desire produces the will to perform, when occasion serves, acts calculated to contribute to his good. If this is Sir James's meaning, he only

states a matter of fact, with which no human being, having the exercise of reason, is unacquainted. Every body knows that a benevolent affection to any person means, with whatever else, a tendency, greater or less, to do him kindness.

Sir James, in the first four of his sentences, having stated the deep, and hidden fact, that benevolent affections tend to produce benevolent acts, gives us a piece of notable information in the fifth. "The result of what Brown justly calls *a finer analysis*, shews a mental contiguity of the affection to the volition to be much closer than appears on a coarser examination of this part of our nature." Sir James was a prime hand at the finer examination.

What does he mean by the *mental* contiguity of the affection to the will? Did he suppose there is such a thing as a corporeal contiguity of two mental states?

But again, what idea had he in his head, when he used the word contiguity on this occasion? Contiguity between compassion, for example, and the giving of alms. Does it express anything but the matter of fact; that compassion for a man in want is very often followed by an act to relieve him? If it be merely a statement of the fact, it answers no purpose; if it be intended for an explanation of the fact, it explains nothing. When he says, that compassion is contiguous to

the will to relieve, does it mean anything else than that, somehow or other, the one follows the other? If so, it is again a mere statement of the fact. If it means any thing else, what is it? I am able to conceive but one other meaning. States of mind exist in sequence, one after another. This being so, two states of mind in a train may be either proximate, or they may be separated, by one or more intervening states. It may be said for Sir James, that he stated the compassion and the volition, in this case, to be proximate states. In the first place, this as little accounts for the moral approbation of the act, as if the two states were ever so far asunder. The remark is away from the subject. In the next place, they are not proximate states. The sight of the beggar excites in me the idea of his distress; that suggests the idea of relief to his distress; the idea of relief to distress is a pleasurable idea, that is, a desire; the desire strongly suggests the idea of what will produce the effect desired; that is, money; that suggests the idea of where money is to be had, namely, in my pocket; that suggests the idea of taking it out; the idea of taking it out suggests the idea of the movement of my hand, which is followed by the appropriate muscular contraction; the money in my hand suggests the idea of putting it into the hand of the beggar; that idea suggests the idea of the operation necessary, and the muscular con-

traction follows. Such is the result of "the finer analysis" which Sir James talked of. It does the very reverse of what he expected. It shows that *contiguity* is not the relation in which the affection stands to the volition.

However, Sir James, having established his contiguity in his own way, that is, by making a proposition asserting it, tells us what happens in consequence. "The most active power of reciprocal suggestion subsists between them." This is incomprehensible. Reciprocal suggestion between A and B can only mean this, that A suggests B, and back again B suggests A. But who before ever talked of a will's being suggested; an affection's being suggested? A will is *caused;* an affection is *caused.* Now an affection may, in some sense, be considered as cause, though a remote, not the proximate cause, of the volitions which may be traced up to it; but what exquisite absurdity in saying, that affection is cause, will effect; and reciprocally, will is cause, affection effect? The effect produces the cause, as the cause produces the effect. It could not, I think, have been believed, till the experience of the fact, that the habit of using words without annexing ideas to them, could have carried any man to this excess.

In the 10th sentence we are told, "they become entirely independent sentiments."

It is not very easy to find out what is the

antecedent to "they." After a search, which goes back to the seventh sentence, it appears to be the volitions which are contiguous to the affections.

He says these volitions are independent. He might just as well have called them green or globular. If independent, of what are they independent? Not surely of the desire which causes them. Nor is the desire which causes them independent of the contemplated pleasure by which itself is caused. The pleasure of him who wills is still the cause of the will. If Sir James means that the will depends upon nothing but the man who wills; what is that more than to say, he that wills, wills?

But this is not all; these independent volitions have affections for their parents. This is a curious way of talking of the volitions which spring from the desires included in the complex state of mind we call an affection. But it is still more curious to tell us that volitions "receive nourishment." What idea is it possible to annex to that expression? Nourishment performs two operations; it contributes to growth, and it preserves alive? Volition has no occasion for either. Volition is a momentary state of mind. Its generation and extinction, are not only proximate; they are almost simultaneous.

A volition, says Sir James, is continually "receiving supplies of nourishment from its parent affections." Sir James, when talking of

volition, seems to have thought of something like a sucking pig.

If he meant to say, that a benevolent affection toward an individual tends to produce a succession of benevolent acts; this is not nourishing a volition, it is the causing of many volitions.

Further, if this be the meaning, it is a bare repetition of what we have had occasion to remark on before, the statement of a well-known fact, which has no bearing on the question Sir James is at work upon.

On account of what follows, it is necessary to notice the concluding expressions of the sentence, which go back to the parent affections, to tell us something important about them. They, "in well balanced minds, reciprocally strengthen each other; unlike the unkind passions, which are constantly engaged in the most angry conflicts of civil war."

To say that gratitude, compassion, and other social affections, reciprocally strengthen each other, is to tell us something of this sort, that a man's compassion for A is stronger for his gratitude to B; his kindness to his servant stronger on account of his love for his wife; the love of his wife stronger on account of his kindness to his servant, and so on. By the same theory, his love of his wife ought to be the stronger, the more he loves other women; an inference which wives in general do not allow.

But it seems the case is totally different with the dissocial affections. They do not strengthen each other. They operate to mutual destruction. An admirable operation, surely; for if such principles exist, the very thing to be desired is, that they should oppose and extinguish one another, by being, as Sir James, in Blackmore phrase, informs us, "continually engaged in the most angry conflicts of civil war," citizen against citizen, son against father, father against son.

Sir James, at the same time, gives us to understand, that of the conflicts of civil war, some are more angry, and some less; but that the conflicts in the civil war of the dissocial affections, that is, the conflicts or battles of one dissocial affection with another, which it seems are perpetual, are the most angry of all.

Now general opinion, which appears in this case to be the faithful interpreter of general experience, holds, that in so far as there are any ties of affinity among affections of the same genus, those among the dissocial are even stronger than those among the social; that anger does not oppose hatred, nor hatred anger, but the contrary; that jealousy does not oppose envy, nor envy jealousy, nor either revenge, but the reverse.

But what there is of truth in the case, mangled in Sir James's talk, about the strength which one social affection derives from another, the angry

conflicts of civil war in which one dissocial affection is continually engaged with another, is this; that the mind passes from one state to another of a similar kind, more easily and readily, than it does to one of a dissimilar kind. Something of this readiness is no doubt observed in the states of mind we call the social affections. They do, to a certain degree, go together, but in a very irregular and unsteady way. It by no means follows, because a man is fond of his wife, and pliant to her will, that he is not a hard-hearted, oppressive brute. It by no means follows, because a man has affection towards his children, that he has much fellow-feeling with the rest of his species. We know perfectly well, that the most intense friendship and affection to individuals can exist in the most savage and remorseless of all human minds; witness the tendency to favouritism in the worst of tyrants.

And so totally does Sir James miss the matter (no rare thing, you will say, with Sir James), that this tendency to pass from one affection to another of the same kind, is far more constant in the case of the dissocial, which, according to him, are in continual conflict, than in the case of the social, which, according to the same authority, are continually strengthening one another.

The 12th is the next sentence, relating to the sentiments which precede the act, and it might be considered a miracle, if Sir James did not treat

us to so many things of the same sort. "They" (the sentiments which precede the act, and the act itself) "are for their own sakes, the object of desire."

We need not go further back than to the volition. A volition exists for the sake of an act. An act exists for the sake of its consequences. Neither a volition, therefore, nor an act, ever is an object of desire for its own sake. I will to move my arm; not for the sake of willing, but of something else. I move my arm, not for the sake of moving it, but the consequences,—the striking down a serpent, for example, making ready to bite a person who is dear to me.

Wonderful as is the 12th sentence, the 13th surpasses it. "They" (the states of mind which precede the act) "thus constitute a large portion of those emotions, desires, and affections, which regard certain dispositions of the mind, and determinations of the will as their sole and ultimate object." By "large portion" he means all that relates to benevolence, and only reserves what relates to courage and the self-regarding virtues, which are to be expounded subsequently.

"The desires, aversions, sentiments, or emotions," which have dispositions and actions for their end, were, in the article on Butler, spoken of as *motives*. "Among motives to action," said Sir James, "they alone are justly considered as universal."

We are here told how they are constituted. They are constituted by the sentiments spoken of in the preceding or 12th sentence. But these also are the sentiments which precede the act. What we are told then in the 13th sentence is, that the sentiments which precede the acts are constituted by themselves. And in the 14th we come to the grand development. The sentiments which precede the act, which are constituted by themselves, are the sentiments which follow the act; "what are called," says Sir James, "the moral sense, moral sentiments, or *conscience*." In other words, the object of moral approbation, and moral approbation, are one and the same thing.

Let us, however, try, if the words will bear another meaning. Let us suppose, that "the desires, aversions, sentiments, or emotions," which have actions for their end, are not motives, as Sir James called them before, or the sentiments which precede the act; but moral approbation and disapprobation, or the sentiments which follow it. First of all, it is curious to call moral approbation and disapprobation, by the name of "desires, aversions, sentiments, emotions." It seems to be a state of mind of a different order. In the next place, Sir James says, this approbation or disapprobation is constituted, which here must mean caused, by the acts, mental and corporeal parts included. But the act which causes moral approbation is the act approved. What Sir

James then says is,—that when I approve a moral act, a desire, sentiment, or emotion, one or all, is constituted in me, by that which I approve. Which seems to me to amount to this, that what I approve excites in me approbation. Or, in other words, moral approbation is what it is.

There is still, however, a puzzle. Sir James says, these desires, &c., *alias*, this approbation, has acts for its end. If this means that acts are its object; that is, that acts are the things approved, it is a truth, though monstrously expressed, and of which no mortal needed to be informed. But when Sir James says, that this approbation, which, in order to exist, must be caused, and of which, according to the above interpretation, the cause is the end, has acts for its end, what does that mean? that beside the acts which caused, there are other acts which are to be caused by it? And in Sir James's use of language, are both the cause, and the effects, of an action, to be called its end? This is rather confusing.

Sir James tells us more about this moral sense, or conscience, in the 7th, 8th, and 9th sentences. He there says, we have a pleasure in contemplating moral acts, the contrary in contemplating immoral acts. This is tantamount to saying, that we have the faculty of moral approbation and disapprobation, called also, as he tells us, "the moral sentiments, moral sense, conscience."

We tell him once more, that we had no occasion for this information, at his hands.

Besides a pleasure in the contemplation of a moral act, Sir James, in the 11th sentence, says, that under the influence of this pleasure we have a desire to perform similar acts. But this is only another part of that very unnecessary information which Sir James is giving us; that we have the moral sentiments. Did Sir James not know, that in moral approbation there is both a pleasure and a desire? Moral approbation is a pleasurable sentiment, as all the world knows. Also, when I feel moral approbation, is not that as much as to say, I feel the desirableness of the act? and can any thing else be meant, by saying we desire to perform such acts?

Sir James's wording is always original. "We desire to experience volitions." To experience a volition is to will. But what is the will? Answer: Desire of an act. To desire to will, therefore, is to desire to desire.

"We desire to cultivate a disposition towards a volition." As a disposition towards a volition is the habit of obeying the motives to it, this is the same desire as the former.

Sir James also here speaks of voluntary acts correspondent to volitions. Did he imagine that there are voluntary acts not so correspondent?

Sir James comes at last to the act, and says, our

desire also is to perform it. He might, in that case, have spared his talk about the volition, and the disposition. The man who desires the act desires the mental part of it as well as the corporeal. All is included in the act.

A few explanatory words on disposition are necessary, to obviate ill effects from the confusion of Sir James's. Mr. Mill has analysed and explained disposition; and shewn it to be a readiness of being acted upon by a particular class of motives. This readiness is produced by repetition. A desire to cultivate a disposition is, therefore, a desire to repeat the acts.

And now it will be agreeable to have the propositions by which we have been conducted to this important point, before us, in order:—

1.

Affections are formed by the transfer of pleasures to new objects.

2.

Affections are followed by volitions to gratify them.

3.

The affections are contiguous to the will.

4.

Between the affections and the will there is an active power of mutual suggestion.

5.

The idea of benevolent acts, the bodily and mental parts both included, is a pleasurable idea.

6.

The volitions are independent sentiments.

7.

These volitions have affections for their parents, and receive nourishment from their parents.

8.

The benevolent affections strengthen one another; the angry fight.

9.

When the kind passions are in operation, we desire to do kind acts, mental and corporeal parts included.

10.

Benevolent acts, mental and corporeal parts included, are desired for their own sakes.

11.

Benevolent acts, mental and corporeal parts included, constitute emotions, desires, and affections, which have acts (mental and corporeal parts included) for their ends.

12.

These emotions, desires, and affections, are the moral faculty, moral approbation.

We have thus, as far as the benevolent motives are concerned, Sir James's "Theory" complete.

1. Feelings, or affections, which are moral, cause actions which are moral: Answer to the question, what is morality;—a moral act is that which is caused by a moral affection.

2. These feelings, which cause moral acts, are moral approbation, or the cause of it; doubtful which. In the first sense, the cause and the effect are the same. In the second, the affirmation is, that moral approbation is the approbation of moral acts.

I am afraid to spend more time in illustrating the mode in which Sir James has brought us to these wonderful conclusions; and I am also afraid to make such a call upon my reader for attentive thought, as the brevity of my exposition obliges me to hazard. Another part of Sir James's theory now comes into view.

The benevolent feelings play the great part, but not the only one, in Sir James's "theory;" the malevolent feelings come in for their share.

"When anger is duly moderated, when it is proportioned to the wrong, when it is detached

from personal considerations, when dispositions and actions are its ultimate objects, it becomes a sense of justice, and is so purified as to be fitted to be a new element of conscience."

It looks strange, at first, to see anger made an ingredient of conscience. This is doing business with the feelings to some extent.

Observe the wording. "When anger is proportioned to the wrong, it becomes a sense of justice." How does the angry man know when his anger is proportioned to the wrong, except by applying to it his sense of justice? He has the sense of justice therefore before he makes his anger such a sense; and then what is the use of his operation?

"When detached from personal considerations." What does that mean? When is a man's anger detached from personal considerations? Is it when he is angry for a wrong, not done to himself, but to some other body? It is not commonly in that case difficult to keep one's anger from running to excess. The restraint of conscience is needed principally when it is our own wrongs we are resenting.

An anger detached from personal considerations, may mean an anger detached from persons or individuals. If so, it can only be anger, on account of wrongs done to the public. This kind of anger, it is not generally very difficult to keep within bounds.

Anger, among other things, means the desire of punishment on the wrong-doer.

But punishment of public wrongs is for the sake of prevention, not of revenge. It regards future acts, not the past. The past act is done, and cannot be made not to be done. With respect to that, punishment would be altogether useless; therefore unjustifiable. But with respect to future acts, which require prevention, punishment, just sufficient to create a motive for abstaining from them, and no more, is all that is good. And this requires no anger. Punishment of this sort is better managed without anger.

To make anger an element of conscience, it must conform to another condition. It must have "dispositions and actions for its ultimate objects."

We have been puzzled, before, to make out, in Sir James's philosophy, whether the feelings which have dispositions and actions for their objects, and which he calls emotions, desires, affections, are those feelings which precede, or those which succeed the act. We seem here to be relieved of that difficulty. It is evident that anger is caused by an act. We are angry at something done. The anger follows the act. When Sir James then says, that anger has actions for its object, does he mean by object, cause? And if the act which causes it, is not its object, what is the other act to which he gives that name? It is

deplorably true, that Sir James calls sometimes the cause of an act, and sometimes its effect, its object. He leaves us here in doubt whether he means the one or the other. Is this worthy of the man who told us, in so high a tone, in the beginning of the article on Bentham, that he was capable of performing, and had performed, the part of a consummate judge of the philosophers of all ages and nations?

Sir James, by saying, "when it has actions for its ultimate objects," undoubtedly means, that there are times when it has not. But there can be no time when it has not a cause. His language, then, here implies (whether he meant it God knows!) that we are to consider effects as the "objects" spoken of. Now what acts are the effects of anger? The acts of course of the angry man. What are they? Acts of revenge. Sir James says, the anger which prompts them is an element of conscience, when it is detached from personal considerations. Is not this a satisfactory account of moral disapprobation? The cause of the act (the anger) becomes conscience, when the angry man is not angry for any harm done to himself, nor acts, under his anger, with a view to procure any good to himself. He can do nothing, in short, under the impulse of his anger, which is wrong, provided it is not done on his own account.

Sir James having thus formed a conscience for

benevolent acts, and also for malevolent acts, in certain cases, bethought himself that a conscience was also needed for heroic acts, and temperate acts. I say *bethought* himself, literally, not ironically, because in telling us what makes an act moral, he entirely overlooked these classes. He gave us his account, such as it was, why benevolent acts are called moral. We have as yet no information from him, why acts of justice are moral, or acts of courage, or acts of temperance. He is now however going to tell us how courage and temperance "become parts of conscience."

On courage he discourses in the 18th of the paragraphs we have quoted above; and to save transcription, I shall entreat the reader to refer to it, and peruse it. The result, as given in the last sentence is, "that courage, energy, decision, contribute to form conscience, which levies large contributions on every province of human nature."

The contributions which conscience is here said to levy are things to form part of itself. Conscience, it seems, levies these contributions from every province of human nature. That is to say, conscience is made up of parts from every province of human nature. Is not this another instance, and that a remarkable one, of the habit which possessed Sir James, of putting words together without regard to their meaning? Is not the faculty of receiving sensations, a pretty

large and important province in human nature? What are the sensations which go to the formation of conscience? Those of the touch, those of the eye, or what other?

But is not the present talk of Sir James about the reception into conscience of the various affections of human nature, the impulse of courage included, inconsistent with what, instructed by Butler, whom he professes to follow, he told us formerly, that conscience is a faculty apart from all the active principles, the impulses, of human nature; they pursuing, each its own object, without regard to good or evil; and conscience having for its province to dictate when they are to be obeyed, and when resisted?

Sir James appears to have known about as much of the philosophy of courage, as he did of "The First Book of Euclid," of which he was not ignorant that it was about diagrams, As and Bs.

Sir James had no notion, that courage is in itself a mere rating of the chance of certain evils at less than the good which is sought by incurring it; and just as capable of being employed for the worst of purposes as for the best. Sir James, indeed, admits, "that the nature of courage, energy, and decision, is prone to evil;" which is not true. Courage is not more prone to evil than good, nor to good than evil. The man who has it, uses it according to his propensities, good

or bad. It is power; and like every other kind of power affords temptation to the man who has it, to make a bad use of it. And it must be confessed that it operates hurtfully in another way. It has a great effect on the imagination; and is not without a certain admiration attached to it, even when it is employed mischievously; whence it has been one great cause of the perversion of the moral sentiments.

When Sir James talks about the wild state of courage, in which state it is savage and destructive, he entirely misses the matter. Courage is not more savage in one state than another; but man is; and uses his courage more often for savage purposes. And when he talks about its being tamed by the affections, he only gives us some of his nonsense. When a man becomes wise and virtuous, he uses his courage for good purposes. And this Sir James (God bless us) calls the taming of courage by the society of the affections. I shall pass over the tasteful comparison of a tamed courage with a tamed elephant, and Sir James's panegyric upon the tamed courage, and come to "the delightful contemplation of it." Whatever was in the head of Sir James, when he set down these words, if there was any thing in it beyond the words themselves, even young learners, in this science, know that there can be only one thing which is the delightful contemplation of courage. It is the idea of it, a

a cause of good; that is, the idea of it joined by association with the ideas of all the good things, some of them of the highest value, of which it may be considered as, in some way, the cause. And that idea is a pleasurable idea; pleasurable sometimes in a very high degree.

What next does he tell us about this idea? It "becomes, when purely applied, one of the sentiments of which the dispositions and actions of voluntary agents are the direct and final object."

"When purely applied." When is it that the idea of courage is impurely applied?

"The idea of courage becomes (*is*) a sentiment." What sort of a sentiment? "One of those which have voluntary acts for their object." Does object here mean cause, or effect?

Sir James's ideas are so exquisitely confused, that it is impossible to trace his syntax. He says, "the delightful contemplation of these qualities" (the courageous qualities), "when purely applied, becomes one of the sentiments, of which the dispositions and actions of voluntary agents are the direct and final object. By this resemblance *they* are associated with the other moral principles, and with them contribute to form conscience." I will give a premium to him who will tell me what "they," in the last sentence, refers to?

By trying the different suppositions, with a

view to fix upon that which seems the least remote from sense, I suppose the qualities, which are the object of the delightful contemplation. These are the various forms of courage. His assertion, then, is, that the various forms of courage, being contemplated with delight, contribute to form conscience.

But Sir James is always very niggard of his meaning. When he says, we contemplate courage with delight, does he mean courageous acts? And do they become part of conscience? The acts, and the moral approbation of them—are they the same? If it be said for him, that he means the mental states which lead to courageous acts; that is, the mental part of the acts; we have only the same conclusion we had before, that the sentiments which precede the act, and the sentiments which follow it, are the same. In other words, moral approbation, in the case of courage, is courage.

"By this resemblance." The point of resemblance is, the being one of "the sentiments of which the dispositions and actions of voluntary agents are the direct and final object." But what is it which has this resemblance? The delightful contemplation. Well, by this resemblance, you imagine, that the delightful contemplation becomes something. No such thing. The qualities, the things contemplated become. Because the contemplation of them is a sentiment which has a

resemblance to the sentiments which have voluntary acts for their end, they are associated with the other moral principles.

This has not even the aspect of any thing but an abortion of a meaning. The sentiments which have voluntary acts for their end, we have had enough to do with already. Sir James seldom enables us to decide, whether by *end* he means cause or effect; that is, whether the sentiments he speaks of are prospective, or retrospective. In fact, he did not make the distinction. But any sentiment, all sentiments, "aversions, desires, emotions, sentiments," if they have but acts for their end, whether causes, or effect, are, Sir James assures us, conscience. The sentiment retrospective is moral approbation. That we allow him to call conscience, though he should have told us something more about moral approbation, than that it has another name, conscience. The sentiments prospective may be all included under the name motive, as marking both the desire which precedes, and the volition which follows; and then motive and moral approbation are the same.

I trust it is not necessary to say any thing more about the glaring absurdity on which all this unmeaning talk has turned, that a sentiment, whether desire or motive, has an end, while nothing has an end but a man. When the man looks towards an act prospectively, the conse-

quences of the act are his end. When he looks towards the act retrospectively, he approves or disapproves the act; though there is an utter absurdity in saying that a past act is the *end* of a present sentiment.

So much, to shew us how courage, which is the object of moral approbation, becomes an element of conscieuce, that is, the moral approbation of itself.

Sir James in his 19th paragraph, undertakes to teach us all about the self-regarding virtues; and a fine piece of teaching it is. I must request the reader to turn to the Appendix for this also.

First of all, these virtues must be valued for their own sake. In other words, they must be their own end. A man performs an act of temperance, an act of prudence, not for the sake of the consequences, but for the sake of the act. In confirmation whereof, he tells us that Aristotle was of the same opinion. "It was excellently observed," he says, "by Aristotle, that a man is not commended as temperate, so long as it costs him efforts of self-denial to persevere in the practice of temperance, but only when he prefers that virtue for its own sake." But Sir James was poorly read in Aristotle. Aristotle is directly opposed to Sir James on this point; for Aristotle's opinion is, that actions are good and called virtuous, solely on account of their consequences. When Aristotle says, that as a man

is master of a foreign language, not when he can barely pick out words, to make himself understood by; but when he has by habit acquired the power of using the words readily, and as it were mechanically; so, a man only merits the name of virtuous, when virtuous acting is so habitual to him, that he performs it in the way which Hartley calls secondarily automatic. Sir James imagines this is the same thing with saying, that the acts are their own ends. Oh, Reputation, Reputation! what art thou, in a land where the well-born, and the ill-educated, have the making of thee?

Next, Sir James says, "It may reasonably be asked, why these useful qualities are morally approved, and how they become capable of being combined with those public and disinterested sentiments, which principally constitute conscience?" That is to say, how they become, both the object of moral approbation, and also the moral approbation itself.

"The answer," he says, "is, because they are entirely conversant with volitions, and voluntary actions." This makes them both morality, and moral approbation.

You stare, reader, and well you may.

"A quality entirely conversant with volitions and voluntary acts;" why, is not the walking quality, a quality of this sort, and the sitting quality, and the standing quality, and the eating

and drinking qualities, and the speaking quality and the singing quality; aye, and the nonsense-philosophy quality?

When Sir James says, that Prudence and Temperance are "entirely conversant with volitions and voluntary acts," it can be nothing more than the Sir Jamesical mode of telling us, that acts of Prudence, and acts of Temperance are voluntary acts. And then Sir James's proposition is, that acts of temperance and acts of prudence are objects of moral approbation, because they are voluntary acts. Certainly they would not be objects of moral approbation, if they were not voluntary. Thus far all the world are of Sir James's mind.

Sir James goes on: "Like those other principles" (that is, the other constituents of conscience, of which anger is one) "they" (that is, the self-regarding virtues) "may be detached from what is personal and outward, and fixed on the dispositions and actions, which are the only means of promoting their ends."

Of this the object seems to be, to maintain the disinterestedness of human nature; that even when a man is acting for his own good, purely, he is not acting for it; that in labouring for the support of himself and family, and in abstaining from every indulgence which may curtail his security against a period of inability to labour, he is doing all without a thought of him-

self. A writer who can make propositions involving absurdities like this, does deserve to be held up as a warning. "Dispositions and actions" of this sort need to be fixed on; if not by prudence and temperance, at least by something which may operate to their prevention.

Prudence and temperance (which he calls "qualities" "useful qualities") when detached from their consequences; that is, the good which acts of prudence and temperance do; are to be fixed on dispositions and actions.

Fixing a quality on a disposition,—what is it we are to understand by that?

As a disposition is a quality, does it mean, fixing one quality on another; making a union of two qualities? But Sir James says, they are fixed both on dispositions and actions; now, how a quality is to be fixed on an action, is more puzzling. The dispositions and actions, on which these qualities must be fixed, in order to entitle them to moral approbation, are the dispositions and actions, which are "the only means of promoting their ends."

"Their,"—does that mean prudence and temperance? or does it mean the dispositions and actions on which they are fixed?

If the latter, what is affirmed is, that there are certain dispositions and actions, which are the only means of promoting their own ends. But this is true of all actions. Malevolent actions

(for actions include the dispositions) are the only means to the gratification of a malevolent purpose. In this sense, when Sir James says, that prudence and temperance must be fixed on such dispositions and actions as are the means of promoting their own ends, he says that prudence and temperance must be fixed on all actions.

If "their" is to be construed with prudence and temperance as its antecedent, the meaning is, that they are to be fixed on themselves; for it is not questionable that the only acts and dispositions which are the means to promote the ends of prudence and temperance, are acts of prudence and temperance.

According to all preceding philosophers, the end of the self-regarding virtues, prudence, temperance, is the good of the individual, of him who practises them. Sir James says no; the end of them is themselves. This he had told us before, and we had told him something of our mind about it. A thing may be an end; but if so, it is the end of some thing different from itself. Pleasure is an end, and generically speaking, the only end. But it is precisely the same nonsense, to say that a pleasure is its own end, as to say that a pleasure is its own pleasure. In the same manner, to say that temperance is its own end, is to say that temperance is its own temperance; which is only a very absurd way of saying that temperance is temperance.

To sum up. There are two reasons, why temperance and prudence are entitled to moral approbation. First, they consist of voluntary acts; secondly, they are their own ends. They are good; why? Because they are good for themselves.

This is what Sir James calls "the theory of action," in regard to prudence and temperance. We now proceed to what he calls the "theory of the sentiments."

"All those sentiments, of which the final object is a state of the will, become thus intimately and inseparably blended; and of that perfect state of solution the result is *conscience.*"

By "state of the will," an absurd expression, he can only mean an act of willing, a volition. Well; what are the sentiments whose object is an act of willing, or a volition? Motives, to be sure; and all motives alike.

What we now, therefore, learn from him is, that all motives become intimately and inseparably blended; and of that perfect state of solution, conscience is the result: in other words, conscience is such a dissolving of motives, as is called by chemists, in relation to chemical matters, a solution.

Reader, are you not well instructed in the nature of conscience now? Is not your obligation to Sir James of a high order?

Peradventure, in behalf of Sir James, some one

will say, he did not mean all "sentiments whose object is a state of the will," but those only whose object is a virtuous state of the will. Allow him this correction; though he is not entitled to it, for it is evident he knew nothing of his need of it: and let us see what can be made of it for his advantage.

His meaning will then amount to this, that the motives to virtuous volitions, so blended as to form a solution, are what we call conscience.

The only case in which there is any blending of motives, is when various motives to the performance of an act concur; which is no doubt a very common case. But then a combination of motives to a particular act, is but a compound motive after all.

Sir James's great discovery, therefore, is, that a motive is conscience, that the incitement to an act, and the moral approbation or disapprobation of it, are the same; in other words, that every act to which we have an inclination, is thereby morally approved.

It is true that Sir James has told us of emotions, desires, and affections, which have the will for their object. These, as we have already seen, must be either the prospective sentiments, motives; or the retrospective, which is moral approbation. The absurdity in the first case has just been shewn for the third or fourth time. The assertion on the latter supposition is,—that moral

approbation is a number of affections towards actions, in some sort of combination. He finds work for his affections. He has already informed us, that they are the sole motives to a moral act, and also that they are the sole objects of moral approbation. He now informs us that they are moral approbation too. He concludes, therefore, with this sublime information, that moral approbation is the approbation of itself.

Even this, however, does not go beyond the absurdity of calling moral approbation a solution of affections. Moral approbation is a judgment. Did Sir James know the difference between judgment and affection? Upon my life, I am not sure.

Sir James has not yet done with his discoveries. He says in his 20th paragraph, that he has looked at the coalition of the private and public feelings from two points of view, from which it has been looked at by very few except himself, perhaps by none.

First, we have to inquire what he means by "the coalition of the private and public feelings."

Among all the wonderful things we have heard from him, we have not before heard of the coalition of the private and public feelings.

Just before, he was shewing us, in his own extraordinary way, how certain private, and certain public feelings, obtain the denomination of moral or virtuous; that is, how they come to be

classed together, under a name, which expresses something they have in common. But classing things under a name, because they have something in common, implies no coalition. We classed Sir James and Sir James's pig under one name, because they had a great deal in common; but we did not by that mean to say that there was any coalition between them. I resist a strong temptation to a hurtful pleasure; I expose my life, and sacrifice half my fortune, to save my friend. Both proceedings are most properly classed under the name of virtue; but there is no coalition, either between the acts, or the states of mind which preceded them.

Well, but what does Sir James mean by his looking at this coalition, which is no coalition, from two points of view? He means, that the coalition does two things. Remarking, that a thing does two things, is looking at it from two points of view. Remarking, that my fire boils my eggs, and warms my fingers, is looking at it from two points of view.

Of the two things done by this non-existing coalition, one is its helping to prove, that "the peculiar character of the moral sentiments consists in their exclusive reference to states of will." The nonsense of the position to be proved, has been already exposed. The aptitude of a non-entity to prove any thing, needs not to be insisted on.

This non-entity, however, goes on proving. It proves that "every feeling which has that quality," (viz., an exclusive reference to states of will,) "when it is purified from all admixture with different objects, becomes capable of being absorbed into conscience."

This is rich.

"Every feeling which has an exclusive reference to a state of will." States of will are threefold; good, bad, and indifferent. Every body knows, who knows anything about the matter, that no feeling has an exclusive reference to a state of will, but a motive. What, then, Sir James affirms is, that every motive to every act, good, bad, or indifferent, is capable of being absorbed into conscience, and becoming a part of it.

Sir James has the qualifying clause—"when it is purified from all admixture with different objects."

A motive can have but one object; the volition by which it is followed. It cannot have admixture with different objects. It still appears, therefore, that all motives to all actions are parts of conscience; of the fusion of which into one mass, conscience consists.

The second point of view, from which Sir James looks at his coalition; meaning, the second thing which it does; is, its making us know, or at least know better than we did before, that virtue

is conducive to individual interest. Qualities useful to ourselves become virtues by the coalition of the private and public feelings; and by this we know that virtue is conducive to individual happiness. Admirable instruction! We learn in the same way, from justice, he says, that virtue is conducive to general interest. And then he goes on to tell us what a happy thing it is to know, that virtue is good for the individual. Recondite philosophy!

I was at first inclined, from mere weariness, to pass by paragraph 21; but I find there are things in it, which it will not be good to pass by.

He first talks to us of the fusion into one mass of the elements of conscience,—says that it is a very perfect fusion; he then tells us, that these elements are "passions;" the elements by the fusion of which ("solution," he calls it) conscience is made, are the passions. Conscience is a solution of passions. I put the doctrine into different expressions, that the reader may, to borrow Sir James's phraseology, "observe it from different points of view."

Now, then, we are to learn what the thing is which he calls a "solution." It is an "affinity." And what is this "affinity?" A "common property." The passions, then, which compose a compound conscience, compose it by their having "a common property." Reader, you are curious about the common property. And a curiosity

you will find it. It is "their having no object but states of the will."

No passion (properly so called) has for its object the state of the will. This is a fact which folly itself seems hardly in need to be told of.

Besides, if one passion has for its object a state of the will, so have all passions. Is conscience composed of the bad passions as much as the good?

He finishes with a position which has nothing to do with his premises; but which merits all our attention on its own account. He says, that the object of moral approbation is merely the power to excite moral approbation. In other words, the object of moral approbation is whatever any man is pleased with; an account of morality which we have had from Sir James before; and which few men, we think, need our help to appreciate.

Well, then, Sir James tells us, we approve that which makes us approve; and that which we approve is, by that very circumstance, worthy of our approbation.

If we are asked, why we approve such and such an action? According to this doctrine there is but one answer: Because we approve it. A blessed account of moral approbation! which yet Sir James affords us, after a much greater man, Dr. Brown.

What these personages do not see (and such

confusion is really surprising in a man like Brown) is, that they are inverting the case. "We approve of actions," say all other men, "because there is something in them which deserves our approbation." "Actions," say these two, "deserve our approbation, because they receive it."

When a rational assertor of the principle of utility says, "I approve of an action, *because it is good;*" his meaning is precise. If he is asked why he calls the action good; he says, "because it conduces to happiness." If asked why he bestows not his moral approbation on all actions conducive to happiness? he answers, that "the approbation, called moral, which is merely the approbation of a portion of human actions classed under that name, is bestowed only where it is needed; not on acts, the performance of which is provided for by the constitution of the individual, but on acts, the performance of which society needs, by the use of means, to secure; of which means, its approbation is one of the most powerful."

We now proceed to Sir James's 22nd paragraph. We cannot do less than quote it entire.

"The question, why we do not morally approve the useful qualities of actions which are altogether *involuntary*, may now be shortly and satisfactorily answered: because conscience is in perpetual contact, as it were, with all the dispo-

sitions and actions of voluntary agents, and is by that means indissolubly associated with them exclusively. It has a direct action on the will, and a constant mental contiguity to it. It has no such mental contiguity to involuntary changes. It has never, perhaps, been observed, that an operation of the conscience precedes all acts deliberate enough to be in the highest sense voluntary, and does so as much when it is defeated as when it prevails. In either case the association is repeated. It extends to the whole of the active man. All passions have a definite outward object to which they tend; and a limited sphere within which they act. But conscience has no object but a state of will; and as an act of will is the sole means of gratifying any passion, conscience is co-extensive with the whole man, and without encroachment, curbs or aids every feeling, even within the peculiar province of that feeling itself. As will is the universal means, conscience, which regards will, must be a universal principle. As nothing is interposed between conscience and the will, when the mind is in its healthy state, the dictate of conscience is followed by the determination of the will, with a promptitude and exactness, which very naturally is likened to the obedience of an inferior to the lawful commands of those whom he deems to be rightly placed over him. It therefore seems clear, that on the theory which has been

attempted, moral approbation must be limited to voluntary operations, and conscience must be universal, independent, and commanding."

Why is moral approbation applied to voluntary, not to involuntary acts? That is the problem which Sir James has taken this wonderful round-about to solve.

An ordinary man would not be much at a loss for an answer. What use, he would say, in approving the stones with which my house is built, or disapproving the fire by which it is consumed? Approbation and disapprobation, like all other rational acts, are performed, where they are capable of producing some effect.

Sir James goes much deeper. The reason, he says, is, that "conscience is in perpetual contact, as it were, with all the dispositions and actions of voluntary agents;" and afterwards, that "conscience is in a state of constant mental contiguity to the will." Does he mean that every man's conscience is in contact with all other men's actions and volitions? Or that each man's conscience is in contact only with his own? In either case, what does his contact mean? If I were called upon to devise something of a rational meaning to the phrase that "conscience is in a state of constant mental contiguity to the will," I should say, I can find only this; that when I approve or disapprove actions as moral or immoral, that is, when my conscience acts, I so approve or disapprove only

voluntary acts. The answer of Sir James, therefore, to the question, why moral approbation is applied to voluntary acts, is simply this,—it is so applied, because it is so applied.

We have to analyse, as well as translate Sir James's lingo.

"Conscience is in perpetual contact, as it were, with all the dispositions and actions of voluntary agents."

"A contact, as it were," is not easily understood. Is it contact, or not contact?

"All the dispositions and actions of voluntary agents." One man has a disposition to walk, another to ride. One man shoots partridges, another catches rats. When Sir James says, that a man's conscience is in contact with his disposition to ride, or his shooting a partridge, what does he mean? Is it, that the man approves of his disposition and action as morally good? The name moral, according to the usage of language, belongs to neither.

Let us now collect the parts of Sir James's account of conscience. It is a solution of the emotions, desires, and affections, which have the will for their object. Those desires which have the will for their object, that is, are desires of the will, and those affections which have the will for their object, that is, are affections for, or love of, the will, when combined in solution (for then they become conscience), are

in a state of contiguity to the will; meaning (for it can mean nothing else), that they are desires and love of the will. We thus arrive at one of Sir James's customary conclusions. The desire of acts of will, and the love of acts of will, are the desire of acts of the will, and love of the acts of the will; for we do not suppose that, for the present purpose, he will desire us to make any distinction between an act of will and a voluntary act; and these desires and loves are conscience.

Sir James goes on, and says,—

"It has never, perhaps, been observed, that an operation of the conscience precedes all acts deliberate enough to be in the highest sense voluntary, and does so as much when it is defeated as when it prevails." This, you see, is one of the discoveries which Sir James gives himself the credit of. But it is asserting as a fact that of which the assertion was, he said, "the radical error in which Mr. Bentham fell into fundamental errors." The operation of a man's conscience which precedes his act, is the consideration of its consequences; that is, bringing the question of utility before his eyes.

But this by the bye; our object at present is to trace the mazes of Sir James's dingo. To understand what an *operation* of Sir James's conscience, "in a state of constant mental contiguity to the will," is, we must recollect what his conscience is. It is a solution of those desires and

affections, if any such there be, which are desires of acts of will and affections of acts of will. But the acts of desires and affections, whether in solution or not in solution, can be nothing but desiring and loving; that is, nothing but the desires and affections themselves. Sir James's conscience, therefore, and an act of his conscience, are one and the same thing. When he tells us, that an operation of the conscience precedes every voluntary act, he must mean that a desire and love of the will so to act precedes the act. We have shewed him, and I trust satisfactorily, that to desire a will, and love a will, is just to will. What we learn from him, therefore, thus painfully, is, that every voluntary act is preceded by an act of volition; or, in other words, that every voluntary act, is a voluntary act. And then we have the problem solved, why conscience is limited to voluntary acts. It is, because voluntary acts are voluntary acts.

Sir James, however, goes a step farther for this solution. The true and ultimate reason of the limitation of conscience to voluntary acts is, that it is "co-extensive with the whole man:" going somewhat beyond the voluntary act.

He proves this proposition by the following process: "Conscience has no object but a state of the will;" and "an act of will is the sole means of gratifying any passion." His premises do not support his conclusion.

If it were true, that conscience had no object but a state of the will, it follows not, that it would have every state of the will for an object: it might have only a part of those states.

Again, if an act of will were the sole means of gratifying a passion, all the acts of men are not for the gratification of passions.

Sir James, therefore, fails in his proof, that conscience is co-extensive with the whole man.

And the proof that this co-extension implies the limitation of conscience to voluntary acts, which would have been somewhat difficult, he does not attempt at all.

For the sake of such of my readers as are in the state of learners, I must state the case in the English tongue.

The question is asked, why we morally approve the generous deed of a man, do not so approve the pulsation of his heart, or the growth of his nails?

The answer is certain, says Sir James, though not easy to find. The approbation is in contact with the will!

Can it be believed, even after the fact, that a man who had the exercise of reason, wrote this?

When I approve the moral act of another man, the approbation is a state of my mind; the will is a state of his. What contact or contiguity is there between these two?

There are two things which all other men dis-

tinguish, with the greatest ease, but which are continually making confusion in the head of Sir James.

These are, the sentiments with which we regard the moral acts of other men; and the sentiments with which we regard our own moral acts.

The terms moral and immoral were applied by men, primarily, not to their own acts, but the acts of other men. Those acts, the effects of which they observed to be beneficial, they desired should be performed. To make them be performed, they, among other things they did, affixed to them marks of their applause; they called them, good, moral, well-deserving; and behaved accordingly.

Such is the source of the moral approbation we bestow on the acts of other men. The source of that which we bestow on our own is twofold. First, every man's beneficial acts, like those of every other man, form part of that system of beneficial acting, in which he, in common with all other men, finds his account. Secondly, he strongly associates with his own beneficial acts, both that approbation of other men, which is of so much importance to him, and that approbation which he bestows on other men's beneficial acts.

It is also easy to shew what takes place in the mind of a man, before he performs an act, which he morally approves or condemns.

What is called the approbation of an act not yet performed, is only the idea of future approbation: and it is not excited by the act itself; it is excited by the idea of the act. The idea of approbation or disapprobation is excited by the idea of an act, because the approbation would be excited by the act itself. But what excites moral approbation or disapprobation of an act, is neither the act itself, nor the motive of the act; but the consequences of the act, good or evil, and their being within the intention of the agent.

Let us put a case. A man with a starving wife and family is detected wiring a hare on my premises. What happens? I call up the idea of sending him to prison. I call up the ideas of the consequences of that act, the misery of the helpless creatures whom his labour supported; their agonizing feelings, their corporal wants, their hunger, cold, their destitution of hope, their despair. I call up the ideas of the man himself in jail; the sinking of heart which attends incarceration; the dreadful thought of his family deprived of his support; his association with vicious characters; the natural consequences,—his future profligacy, the consequent profligacy of his ill-fated children, and hence the permanent wretchedness and ruin of them all. I next have the idea of my own intending all these consequences. And only then am I in a condition to

perform, as Sir James says, the "operation of conscience." I perform it. But in this case, it is, to use another of his expressions, "defeated." Notwithstanding the moral disapprobation, which the idea of such intended consequences excites in me, I perform the act.

Here, at all events, any one may see, that conscience, and the motive of the act, are not the same, but opposed to one another. The motive of the act, is the pleasure of having hares; not in itself a thing anywise bad. The only thing bad is the producing so much misery to others, for securing that pleasure to myself.

The state of the case, then, is manifest. The act of which I have the idea, has two sets of consequences; one set pleasurable, another hurtful. I feel an aversion to produce the hurtful consequences. I feel a desire to produce the pleasurable. The one prevails over the other. And this is what Sir James calls the contact of the conscience and the will. This too, is that precedence of conscience, which he says is a discovery of his own.

Bless the memory of Sir James! Was he ignorant that this is included in the very definition of a voluntary act? Nothing in an act is voluntary but the consequences that are intended. The idea of good consequences intended, is the pleasurable feeling of moral approbation: the idea of bad consequences intended is the painful

feeling of moral disapprobation. The very term voluntary, therefore, applied to an act, which produces good or evil consequences, expresses the antecedence of moral approbation or disapprobation.

From the universality of conscience, he infers, not only that it is limited to voluntary acts, (limited by universality!) but that it is entitled to take the command, and exercise authority over the man. Between these premises and the conclusion there is no connection. Universality carries with it no title to authority.

If Sir James had consulted me, I could have told him of a principle more exactly coextensive with the whole man than moral approbation and disapprobation.

When any person takes a view of the consequences of his acts, and marks some of them as good, some evil, to other persons, he necessarily marks them all as good or evil to himself; and as their goodness or badness with respect to others has an effect upon him as a motive, their goodness or badness with respect to himself cannot be without some influence.

If Sir James had known of this principle, he surely would have said that self-love is the principle which is entitled to authority over the man; and the reason is, that self-love is in constant contact with the will, and co-extensive with the whole man.

Sir James says, "when the mind is in its

healthy state," whatever that state may be, "there is nothing interposed between conscience and the will." Conscience, in this healthy state, therefore, is motive.

As conscience and motive are the same, Sir James says, "the dictate of conscience is followed by the determination of the will." Not always: all motives are liable to be opposed, and overcome by a stronger motive. When Sir James's motive called conscience is so overcome, the determination of the will cannot be called a following of conscience, but of something else.

——— Ohe,
Jam satis.

There are two other paragraphs of Sir James's general remarks. But as they are immaterial to his theory, we gladly spare the reader and ourselves the trouble of expounding them.

The business, which Sir James undertook, was to shew, that association accounts for moral approbation and disapprobation.

This was to be done by performing the analysis of these sentiments; tracing them to their simple elements; making it appear how these elements combined or associated compose the sentiments, and how the phenomena correspond with this explanation.

Of this Sir James has performed not a tittle. Instead of it, what has he done? Covered some.

pages with the most perfect nonsense that ever blotted paper.

Having already presented a synoptical view of the original process, by which Sir James shewed us what moral approbation is in regard to beneficence, I think it good to present a similar view of the process by which he shews what it is, first in regard to courage, secondly, in regard to prudence and temperance.

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1. Courage is in itself admirable, independently of its tendency to produce good or evil.

2. "The delightful contemplation of it, when purely applied, has for its direct and final object dispositions and actions of voluntary agents."

3. Courage is thence "associated with the other moral principles; and becomes a part of conscience."

More briefly:—The delightful contemplation of courage, has for its object courage; and courage being thus contemplated, becomes a part of conscience.

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1. Virtuous acts of the self-regarding kind, to deserve moral approbation, must be their own ends; *alias*, they are done for the sake of being done.

2. The self-regarding virtues are entirely con-

versant with volitions and voluntary acts. And as the volitions and the voluntary acts in question are themselves the virtues in question; this is as much as to say, the self-regarding virtues are entirely conversant with themselves; in which, he adds, they resemble the other constituents of conscience. Remember that, just before, we had found the constituents of conscience to be motives. The self-regarding virtues, therefore, resemble motives in this, that they are entirely conversant with themselves.

3. By this resemblance, they become fitted to coalèsce with them; that is, by being conversant entirely with themselves, they are fitted to coalesce with other things which are entirely conversant with themselves. Surprising aptitude!

4. The self-regarding virtues may be fixed on the means of promoting their ends. Their ends, according to Sir James, are themselves; they are therefore fixed on the means of promoting themselves; a volition fixed on the means of promoting itself!

5. From the perfect blending of all the sentiments of which the final object is a state of the will, results conscience.

Does this, after what we have seen, need any comment? No.

And thus, Reader, have you received Sir James's instructions in the mysteries of moral approbation. But whether it is an emotion, or a desire,

or an affection, or a motive, or a volition, one or other; or all, or a delightful contemplation, or an entire blending of the sentiments which regard the will, whatever those sentiments may be, which Sir James says not—he has left you in the dark; and whether you are less or more wise about the matter, than when he began with you, determine and speak for yourself.

APPENDIX A.—(See p. 95.)

"THE moral sentiments are *a class of feelings which have no other object but the mental dispositions leading to voluntary actions, and the voluntary actions which flow from those dispositions.*" This Sir James sets down as his thesis, and marks for peculiar emphasis, by printing the words in Italics.

The genus under which he arranges the moral sentiments, is that of feelings. They are a class of feelings. Well, and what class?

Sir James tells us one thing about them; viz. what is their object; and nothing else whatsoever. It is—

The mental dispositions leading to voluntary action, and the voluntary actions which flow from those dispositions.

First of all, we have to inquire, what it is for a feeling to have an object? One can understand what is meant by the cause of a feeling, or the effect of a feeling. But what is the object of a feeling? In the case of some feelings, we say that something is felt; if we see, there is something seen; love, there is something loved. In other cases the feeling itself is all: the feeling, (if we may use the expression), is the thing felt. Pain, for example, is a feeling; but it is the only thing felt.

In the cases in which we say that something else is felt, as when we say, in the case of admiration, that something is admired, we call the thing felt the object of the feeling; that is, we call the cause of the feeling by that

name. The thing seen is the cause of the seeing; the thing admired is the cause of the admiration.

In the case of those feelings which the Professors Reid and Stewart class under the title *Appetite*, there is a complexity, which obstructs the conception. An uneasy sensation precedes the desire. Thus, what we call hunger is a complex feeling. It includes an uneasy sensation, and the desire of food. The mind therefore, in turning to the cause of the desire, is apt to think of the uneasy sensation. But an uneasy sensation does not, in itself, imply the desire of any thing but relief; the desire of a particular object is caused by the object itself. The desire of water when a man is thirsty, includes the idea of the water, and its agreeable effect. It is that idea which determines him to the water, i. e. constitutes (causes) the desire.

The case is more clear as regards the complicated affections. What we call the object of the love, is the cause of the love. What we call the object of the pity, is the cause of the pity, and so on.

If this be general, then Sir James's indistinct words must mean, that the moral sentiments are caused, or made to exist, by certain things.

We shall not doubt that they are caused. Let us next see what they are caused by.

The feelings of this class, he says, are caused by dispositions, and actions. So far there is not much information. Every body knows, that certain of the feelings, excited by actions with the dispositions from which they proceed, are the very feelings to which the name moral sentiments is given. The proper expression therefore is—not that there is a class of feelings which have for their object actions rising out of dispositions; but that such and such actions, rising out of such and such dispositions, excite such and such feelings; to which feelings, as a class, the name moral sentiments has been given.

Now then there are two things placed before us; cer-

tain things which cause certain feelings, and the feelings themselves which are thus caused. Our business, therefore, is to ascertain correctly; that is, to distinguish and define; first, the class of causes; secondly, the class of effects: in more particular terms, to what actions, flowing out of what dispositions, is the term moral applied? and next, what are the feelings which these actions, when performed, are found to excite or to cause?

The solution of these two problems being the business of moral inquiry, let us see how Sir James goes to work, for satisfying the demand of philosophy in this respect.

He sets forth the class of causes in these words:—"the mental dispositions leading to voluntary action, and the voluntary actions which flow from these dispositions."

This is not very distinct. First of all; "the voluntary actions flowing out of the mental dispositions leading to voluntary action," are all voluntary actions whatsoever. Is that Sir James's meaning? Are all voluntary actions, without exception, moral or immoral? Next; "mental dispositions leading to voluntary action," is about as vague and undistinguishing a description as can well be made. No man with the least tincture of philosophy could have used such an expression on such an occasion; his nature would have revolted at it.

A mental disposition means some state of the mind; the mental dispositions leading to voluntary actions, must mean every mental state which causes volition. Is every mental state, then, which causes volition, either moral or immoral? Is this part of his theory,—that every voluntary act, and every state of the mind causing it, excite the sentiments which he calls the moral sentiments?

Let us see what this doctrine amounts to. Sir James, proceeding to explain the moral sentiments, informs us, they are the sentiments excited by voluntary acts and the states of mind which cause them; making the term voluntary, and moral or immoral, co-extensive. If so, this is merely telling us that the moral sentiments are the

sentiments which are excited by moral acts. In other words, the moral sentiments are the moral sentiments.

It is surprising how great a quantity of the reasoning called profound terminates in this manner; making out, by a laborious, and frequently a very obscure process, that the same thing is the same thing. And then the *formula* Q. E. D.

Sir James says, that "the mental dispositions leading to voluntary action, and the voluntary actions which flow from these dispositions," are the cause of the moral sentiments. Does Sir James mean that the two things here mentioned, the dispositions, and the actions, are two separate causes, each of them producing a separate, and independent effect, the disposition producing one parcel of moral sentiments, the action another? The structure of the sentence certainly implies this. The moral sentiments have for their object (*i.e.* cause), the dispositions, *and* the actions. This is different from what all other men have thought. They say, that the action, separated from the disposition, excites no moral sentiment. The action abstracted from the state of mind, is a physical movement, which has no moral quality. It gets its moral quality from the disposition entirely. In fact, the moral quality is no where but in the mind of the agent. It is the mind of the agent which therefore is the sole cause of the moral feeling; the mere physical movement has nothing to do with it, but as an instrument employed. But what is it in the mind of the agent, which gives it this causitiveness? Sir James says, it is the "mental dispositions leading to voluntary action." And this is all we get from him. First, are there any dispositions leading to involuntary action? This, though a verbal criticism, is not insignificant. No man even half conversant with these speculations would have committed this blunder. Next, in reply to the important question, what is it in the mind of the agent, which causes the feelings we call moral sentiments; or what state of mind

in the agent is it, which has this power;—Sir James produces the "mental dispositions leading to voluntary action." Why, these are all the springs of action without exception. The appetites, the desires, the affections, good, bad, and indifferent, all lead to voluntary action. This is manifestly a man who speaks with the lip, but in whom "the lips" are not "parcel of the mind."

It is not the mental disposition leading to acts in general, but those leading to a particular class of acts, which excite our moral feelings. Why did not Sir James discriminate and expound that particular class of mental dispositions? Had he done this—had he made us know exactly wherein that state of mind consists, which excites in us the feelings called moral, he would have answered one of the questions of which he had undertaken the solution.

All Sir James's phrases seem to be studiously indeterminate; framed to bear the appearance of a meaning, of which in reality they are utterly destitute.

"Leading to." That means causation, of course. But there are causes, some proximate, some remote, and remote in all degrees. Does Sir James, by his "dispositions leading to," mean the causes proximate? or the causes remote? or does he mean both?

"Voluntary actions." Does Sir James mean here to distinguish the volition from the act? or to take them both together? For example, I will to move my arm; the volition: my arm moves; the act. If he takes them separately, he means the dispositions which cause volition. If he takes them together, he means the dispositions which cause volition, which causes the act.

In either case he must mean the dispositions which cause volition; *i.e.* the causes of volition. The causes of volition have been very carefully examined; and Sir James, had he been half as great a reader as he pretended to be, might have told us a good deal that was useful, out of books.

Sir James not having told us whether he means proximate causes, or remote, compels us to go upon both suppositions. To begin with the proximate. These all inquirers are agreed about. Motives are the proximate causes of volition. If then we suppose that Sir James's dispositions mean the proximate cause, when he says that the sentiments we call the moral sentiments are caused by these dispositions, he says they are caused by motives; that which causes a moral sentiment is a motive of the agent. Nothing excites a moral sentiment, but a motive. Moral is a quality of motives. And every motive is moral, at least every motive which causes a volition, which causes an act.

This comes back to the doctrine we have already noted; that voluntary and moral are synonymous terms. And Sir James, moreover, seems to be ignorant that motives have no moral quality. In vulgar language a motive is called good or bad; but in this vulgar language two things are confounded, will and intention.

If we can get no information from Sir James, on the supposition, that by the cause of volition, he means the proximate cause, let us try him on the supposition, that he means the remote causes.

Causes precede one another in a series. A is caused by B; but B was caused by C, C by D, and so backwards. Every cause is itself caused; that is to say, every cause is also an effect. In the series we have mentioned, B, C, D, &c., B is the proximate cause of A, C and D remote causes, and we may go on multiplying the remote causes to any extent; they are in fact endless.

To take the particular case before us. The proximate cause of the act is volition; the proximate cause of volition is the motive; the proximate cause of the motive, is what?

Did Sir James ever ask himself what a motive is? There is no evidence in his book, that he ever did; but

much evidence that he did not. Yet he talks about it as glibly as if it were all perfectly familiar to him.

A motive is something which moves—moves to what? To action. But all action as Aristotle says, (and all mankind agree with him) is for an end. Actions are essentially means. The question, then, is, what is the end of action? Actions, taken in detail, have ends in detail. But actions, taken in classes, have ends which may be taken in classes. Thus the ends of the actions which are subservient to the pleasures of sense, are combined in a class, to which, in abstract, we give the name sensuality. The class of actions which tend to the increase of power, have a class of ends to which we give the name ambition, and so on. When we put all these classes together, and make a *genus;* that is, actions in general; can we in like manner make a genus of the ends; and name ends in general?

If we could find what the several classes of ends; sensuality for example; ambition; avarice; glory; sociality, &c.; have in common, we could.

Now, they have certainly this in common, that they are all agreeable to the agent. A man acts for the sake of something agreeable to him, either proximately or remotely. But agreeable to, and pleasant to; agreeableness, and pleasantness, are only different names for the same thing; the pleasantness of a thing is the pleasure it gives. So that pleasure, in a general way, or speaking generically; that is, in a way to include all the species of pleasures, and also the abatement of pains; is the end of action.

A motive is that which moves to action. But that which moves to action is the end of the action, that which is sought by it; that for the sake of which it is performed. Now that, generically speaking, is the pleasure of the agent. Motive, then, taken generically, is pleasure. The pleasure may be in company or connection with things infinite in variety. But these are

the accessaries; the essence, is the pleasure. Thus, in one case, the pleasure may be connected with the form, and other qualities of a particular woman; in another, with a certain arrangement of colours in a picture; in another, with the circumstances of some fellow-creature. But in all these cases, what is generical, that is, the essence, is the pleasure, or relief from pain.

A motive, then, is the idea of a pleasure; a particular motive, is the idea of a particular pleasure; and these are infinite in variety.

Another question is, in what circumstances does the idea of a pleasure become a motive? For it is evident that it does not so in all. It is only necessary here to illustrate, not to resolve the question. First, the pleasure must be regarded as attainable. No man wills an act, which he knows he cannot perform, or which he knows cannot effect the end. In the next place, the idea of the particular pleasure must be more present to the mind, than any other of equal potency. That which makes the idea of one pleasure more potent than another; or that which makes one idea more present to the mind than another, is the proximate cause of the motive, and a remote cause of the volition. The cause of that superior potency, or of that presence to the mind, is a cause of the volition, still more remote, and so on.

Now then, how much or how little of this does Sir James include in his phrase "mental dispositions leading to voluntary action?" Sir James is silent.

The motive he must include; that is, the idea of a pleasure, more potent than others, in the mind of the agent, either from the absence of others, or its own superior force. Does he include any thing more? If so, it must be the idea of the cause of that superior potency. If more still—the cause of that cause, and so on.

The idea of a pleasure, therefore, predominant from certain causes, with the cause of that predominancy, and

so on, are the dispositions leading to voluntary actions, which Sir James says, excite, or produce, or cause, the moral sentiments.

We may observe, incidentally, that in that case, Sir James's grand ambition, to prove that man has disinterested motives (a contradiction in terms by the bye) is defeated by himself.

Further, it is evident that these dispositions lead to all bad actions as well as to all good. Not to have seen this, does not argue Sir James a very clear-sighted philosopher.

There must of necessity, however, be a difference in the causes to produce such a difference in the effects. Sir James did not advert to that necessity.

If he had been questioned on the subject, he would have told us, in circuitous phrases, somewhat obscure, that the distinction, indeed, is most important, but by preceding philosophers, such as Paley and Bentham, had not been sufficiently observed; when carefully examined, however, it would be found to be this; that of the mental dispositions leading to voluntary acts, some lead to acts of a laudable nature, others to acts of a censurable nature. This, at least, is an answer which seems in the true spirit of Sir James's philosophy.

The case which Sir James has left us to make what we can of for ourselves is sufficiently clear, though it is not very easy to make the language about it clear, without a more lengthened exposition, than I am willing to bestow upon it.

The dispositions which are the cause of good, and the dispositions which are the cause of evil, actions, have this in common, that they include the idea of a pleasure to the agent.

If along with this they include the idea of good to some other person or persons, we call them, and the actions they produce, good. If along with the idea of a pleasure to the agent, they include the idea of evil to

another person or persons, they and the action are called evil.

The mental state which precedes action is thus somewhat complicated. It includes the idea of the pleasure to self; it includes the idea of the action, or actions to be performed, and the idea of the several consequences which may flow from them.

Thus, in the case of a sensual gratification, there is the idea of the gratification, the idea of the act or acts necessary to procure it, and some idea, more or less perfect, of the consequences, either to the agent himself, or to other persons. If the act is to be injurious to other persons, as in the case of adultery, seduction, or rape, we call the action bad, wicked; if the evil consequences affect only the agent, we call it imprudent.

In these cases, the evil consequences are sometimes seen; in others, they are not distinctly seen, or not capable of being distinctly seen. This makes a difference in the degree of the aversion we feel.

Thus, if the evil consequences to the agent are doubtful, we have less of the feeling which makes us ascribe to him imprudence. If the evil consequences to another party are doubtful, we have less of the feeling which imputes guilt to the agent. Thus, too much indulgence in the bodily pleasures is hurtful; but it is so difficult to say, where the harmless ends, and the hurtful begins, that any moderate degree even of excess is very slightly blamed.

Thus, again, if a man borrow money without any intention of repaying it, he is a dishonest man. If he borrows it, and embarks it in a speculation which fails; his conduct, though not exempt from blame, is much less strongly blamed.

Thus, however, it is obvious, that an action is stamped moral, or immoral, from the view of its consequences in the mind of the agent.

When a man believes that such and such will be the con-

sequences of his act, and he performs the act, he is said to intend those consequences. When he believes that hurt will accrue to another from such or such an act, and he performs the act, he is said to intend the hurt. When he believes that hurt to himself will be the consequence, there would be some demur in saying, that he intended hurt to himself; but here intention is confounded with desire. A man cannot desire hurt to himself; but when he performs an act with a perfect foresight that it will do harm to him, it cannot be said that he does not intend it; in the very same sense in which we say that the evil consequences to another, of which he has perfect foresight, are intended by him, though not the end of his action.

Now, then, let us see what we have found for ourselves, without the help of Sir James.

We have found that the mind of the agent alone is capable of virtue, or vice, alone excites in us the feelings called moral sentiments; that the state in which it is, immediately before acting, if it is of one or another kind, excites in us respectively the feeling called moral approbation, or that called moral disapprobation; that this peculiar state of mind includes the motives, together with the intention of good or evil, to the agent, or other person, or persons; the sentiment less strong in the case of the good or evil to the agent, more strong in the case of the good or evil to other person or persons.

Thus, then, we see, what there is in the logomachy (for it is nothing better) about the selfishness or disinterestedness of human nature. There is, in the state of mind preceding every virtuous act (bating the classes of temperate and prudent acts, the direct end of which is the good of the agent), the idea of good to the agent, and also to others. There is no act, except for the sake of pleasure, or a cause of pleasure, to the agent, and there is no virtuous act, bating the classes mentioned, in which the good of others is not intended.

It is said, and said with truth, that the good of another may be the motive. The idea of a cause of pleasure is as fit to make a motive, as a pleasure. If the good of another is a cause of pleasure to the agent, the idea of the good of another may be his motive; as honour may be, or wealth, or power. Can any greater degree of social love be required, than that the good of others should cause us pleasure; in other words, that their good should be ours?

We have thus also found the answer to the first of Sir James's two ethical problems; what is it in an action, which procures it the praise of moral? One class of acts, the prudent and temperate, where the good of the individual is the motive, are the object of moral approbation, if clear of all evil consequences to others, foreseen, *i.e.* intended. Other acts are virtuous, if good to others is intended, though it be not the motive to the act. They are virtuous in a still higher degree, if good to others is also the motive.

The idea, in the mind of the agent, of good to be obtained from his act, is then the sole foundation of the favourable feelings we call moral approbation; it may be the idea of good to himself exclusively, if the prospect of evil to others is not conjoined; if the prospect of good to others is conjoined, though the motive be good to self, the act is still more virtuous; it is treated as entitled to the greatest praise, when good to others is the motive, and the prospect of nothing but what is good to them is conjoined.

This is what is meant by those who say that utility is the principle of virtue. It is the expression of a matter of fact. Useful is a name for the cause of good. The actions which cause good to mankind, that is, which are useful, alone receive the appellation of virtuous.

But when we have found that good to mankind gives their moral quality to actions, one thing remains to be inquired; namely, wherein that good consists. This is

an important part of the investigation, but not necessary for our present purpose.

Sir James, having told us that the mental dispositions leading to voluntary actions, and the voluntary actions, are the object or cause of the sentiments called moral, proceeds to what he intends to be the illustration, or perhaps proof, of his predication.

Of these dispositions and actions he says, that there are some we like, some we dislike; and that we desire to cultivate the dispositions we like, perform the actions we like.

This, if it has any meaning, means, that we desire to be virtuous. But what information is in this? We desire to be wealthy, and powerful, perhaps learned. In Sir James's lingo, we desire to cultivate the dispositions, and perform the acts which lead to those ends. Assuredly, whenever we desire an end, we desire the means towards it.

But to see what is the real import of his talk, we must go to the analysis we have made of what he calls the dispositions leading to voluntary acts. We have seen that the disposition, or state of mind which proximately causes a voluntary act, is the idea of the pleasure which is to be caused by the act. In the case of a moral act, the idea of good to the agent, or some other person, by means of the act, must be combined with the idea of the pleasure to the agent, the one idea called motive, the other intention.

What therefore Sir James tells us is, that we love these two ideas; and love the actions which follow from them; that we desire to cultivate the ideas, and to perform the actions.

Now what is meant by cultivating an idea? The idea, for example, of the sweetness of sugar, or bitterness of aloes? Is it the taking means to have the idea very often present to our minds? That is to be done by creating certain associations. The ideas which are in-

volved in what Sir James here calls the mental disposition leading to a moral act of the benevolent class, are two; the idea of pleasure to the agent; and the idea of good to somebody, further accruing from the act. With regard to the first idea, it can never be absent from the mind, and is not an object either of liking or disliking, and has no need to be cultivated. With regard to the second, the idea of the further good, to the agent or others, the having that present to the mind, and predominant there, is no doubt an object of liking; but to tell us so, is only to tell us, in far-fetched and obscure terms, which explain nothing, what other men, who speak good English, express, when they say that benevolence is an amiable disposition of mind.

But when Sir James tells us, in his own remarkable way, that we love the dispositions which lead to the good of the agent, and the good of others, not a very necessary piece of information, he still omits the question, why we do so. That is the real thing to be expounded. Sir James, however, has given us, instead of that exposition, nothing but a truism in misty phraseology.

Sir James says, we not only like the dispositions, but we like the actions. What is there in an action to like? We have seen that the action is a mere muscular contraction. The disposition which is the cause of the action may be an object of liking, and the consequences which follow from it may be an object of liking, and sometimes both are included under the name action, when the term liking or disliking may, without absurdity, be applied to it. But when a man pretends to speak philosophy, and, taking the action by itself, separated from its antecedent and its consequent, calls it an object of liking or disliking, he only shews himself ignorant of what he is talking about.

Sir James says we not only love the act, but we desire to perform it. What difference, I wonder, did Sir James suppose there is between the desire to perform an act,

and the performing it? I desire to move my arm. The arm moves. The effect follows the cause. The desire of the act, and the action, are antecedent and consequent, in a constant sequence; and the term "performing an action" implies both.

This may be said to be only a criticism on Sir James's language. It is so; but it is something more; it shews that Sir James could not speak like a man who knew any thing about his subject; and it shews instructively to the learner in this science, what a writer comes to, who has lost the faculty of annexing ideas to his words.

Thus much for Sir James's love of the dispositions which lead to voluntary actions, and of the actions which follow from those dispositions; and also for his desire to cultivate the dispositions, and his desire to perform the acts. He says we have that love, and that desire; that is, we are capable of being moved to moral acts, and feel approbation of moral acts. But where was the use of expressing a common sentiment in most uncommon language, which obscures the matter of fact, and does not even attempt any thing towards the explanation of it? Every man has in himself the experience of the moral sentiments. Sir James was not wanted to tell us, either in plain or wonderful language, that we have them. But there are two things which he should have told us, and has not; what these sentiments are, and from what they proceed. He somewhere tells us, that they are a "secondary formation;" but what that is, he has not attempted to shew.

We now come to some more of Sir James's language. Where a man uses and presents to us words only, and not ideas, it is useless to object to verbal criticism. There is nothing else to be done.

"These objects, like all those of human appetite or desire, are sought for their own sakes."

The objects here referred to are "the dispositions and the actions, which we contemplate with satisfaction." Or,

perhaps, they are the cultivation of the dispositions, and the performing of the acts. He had said before, that these are desired, here he says "sought," which is probably intended to mean the same thing.

The desire to cultivate the dispositions leading to voluntary acts, and the desire to perform the actions, regard these objects as ends.

These desires have no need of means for their gratification.

To say that a desire has an object, unless by a figure of speech, is nonsense. A desire, detached from a man desiring, is nothing. A man desiring is said, for convenience of speaking, to have a desire; and to have a desire to a particular object; but this does not mean that there is a something called a desire, and that the desire has an object. There is nothing desiring, but a man; the thing desired is the object of the man. It may be called the object of the desire; but this is only a figurative expression, used because it marks distinctly the particular affection of the man which makes it his object.

Now let us apply the direct and natural language to the subjects of Sir James's figurative discoursing. Let us say that a man desires to cultivate certain dispositions, desires to perform certain acts; and that these objects, this cultivation, and this performance, are the man's ends.

A man's end is to cultivate a disposition; a man's end is to perform an act.

This sounds oddly; and would be rejected by every body at first hearing, but that it is ambiguous—true in one sense—untrue in another; true in the sense in which it is of no use to Sir James—untrue in the sense in which Sir James endeavours to make use of it.

There are two sorts of ends, which should have been distinguished in the mind of Sir James. These are immediate ends, and the ultimate end.

The husbandman desires to plough a field. That is the object, Sir James would say, of the desire; and the

object of a desire, is its end; it is sought for its own sake. Of the husbandman, however, ploughing is not the ultimate end; it is his immediate end; but he desires it only for another end, that he may sow seed in the field; that also he desires for another end; that he may obtain a crop; that for another end, that he may carry the crop to market; that for another end, that he may obtain money for it; and the money itself, for the command of all the good things which may be had for the money.

Now when Sir James says, that to cultivate a disposition is the end of the man who desires to cultivate it, the question is, whether it is his immediate, or his ultimate end. Sir James's mode of proving that it is his ultimate end, by saying it is the end of the desire, is nothing. The end of a desire, is that which a man desires; but that which he desires, he may desire, not as an end, but as a means; not as desirable for its own sake; but desirable solely for the sake of something else.

Now I affirm, as a proposition not doubtful, but certain; and of which to be ignorant, is to be unacquainted with even the elements of this kind of knowledge, that when a man desires to cultivate a disposition, or to perform an act, he desires neither as his ultimate, but only as his immediate end; as a means to something else.

What is a disposition? A readiness to obey a certain class of motives. In other words, it is the means to a farther end.

An act or action never is an end; it is always, and necessarily, a means to something else.

Whatever, therefore, Sir James would build upon his notion, that the objects of his two desires are ultimate ends, falls to the ground.

Sir James's other position is, that these desires need no means for their gratification.

That which gratifies a desire to cultivate a disposition must necessarily be the attainment of the disposition. But the whole process of cultivation is only a series of

means to that end. So far the assertion of Sir James is unfounded.

When he asserts, that the desire to perform an act needs no means to its gratification, the expression is ambiguous. Suppose I desire to take down a book from one of the top shelves in my library: must I not use means? Must I not walk to the spot, and place the steps, ascend the steps, take hold of the book, descend the steps, and walk to my chair? Talking in this way is very insignificant.

If any one says, the desire meant by Sir James is not the desire of the last act of a train, but the desire of an immediate act; as when I desire to move my arm, and the movement immediately follows; he is to be told, that what Sir James calls here the desire of moving, is generally called the will to move. The will and the motion are cause and effect. But cause and effect is a name for an antecedent and a consequent immediately conjoined. This happens in the case of all acts, not moral acts only. It therefore gives no help to the explanation of moral phenomena.

So far Sir James has made no progress whatsoever. He has either spoken what is clearly incorrect; or he has spoken what is nugatory, and not to his purpose.

In copying the sophistry of Butler, Sir James has misapplied it, and converted it into an absurdity.

Butler says, our appetites have each its object, which is its end. Thus our appetite of food has food for its object, and so of the rest. This is true. But what does it mean? Simply this, that our appetite of food is our appetite of food, our appetite of sex the appetite of sex, and so on. He says that these appetites are not self-love. And how does he prove it? Very easily: by changing the meaning of the term self-love. He says, self-love is regard to our happiness as a whole. Other people mean by it the pursuit of selfish gratifications. The man who, to the greatest degree, spends his life in

pursuing the gratifications of his appetites and desires, is according to them the most selfish man. In the language of Butler, he is not selfish at all. A man is not selfish, though he regards nothing but his own gratifications; he is only selfish, when he acts from a regard to his good upon the whole.

Butler knew the import of words better than Sir James. Butler only says, that each appetite has its own object, which it seeks as its end, and never goes beyond. He never says a man has the object of an appetite for his ultimate end. When the man desires food, his idea goes beyond the food, to the pleasure which the food will yield him.

But when a man desires a pleasure, he desires it for himself; which is a case of self-love; and it is only by an abuse of words, that the name self-love can be denied to it.

Sir James says, a man desires a disposition; and because Butler said, that a desire has its own object, which is its end; so this desire has its own object, which is its end: therefore the man desires the disposition for its own sake. This is lame reasoning. Though an appetite may be personified into a sort of a living creature, and said to have an object, which is its ultimate end; it will not do to substitute man for appetite, and say that the same thing which had been called the end of the appetite, is the end of the man. The word appetite is a name given to the desire of a particular thing. The name is limited to that. But when a man desires a particular thing, his thoughts are not so limited. His ideas may, and do go beyond the particular thing. When he desires food, the food is not his sole, and ultimate object. He does not desire food solely for its own sake. He desires it for its consequences.

When you say, therefore, that a man desires a disposition, it does not follow, that he desires it for its own sake; it may not be desired for its own sake at all, but solely for the sake of its consequences.

Besides this, what is meant by a man's desiring a disposition? A desire is the idea of a pleasure, to be derived from something to be done, or to be had. What is a disposition? Let us describe it; first, in general language, next in particular. It is commonly called a tendency to act, or to think, in a certain way. It is, in short, a mental habit. But a mental habit has been fully explained by philosophers, and there is no question about the phenomenon. It is a train of ideas become fixed by repetition; a train of ideas which call up one another in order, and with constancy.

To say that the habitual associations which are the dispositions leading to moral acts, are desirable associations, is only to say that they are agreeable. We know that. But why are they agreeable? That is what we want to know. Are the elements of the pleasure the thoughts of other men's happiness or our own?

We must now look at some more of Sir James's phrases. Those objects, characterized by him as objects of desire, "like all those of human appetite or desire, are," &c. The most remarkable assertion involved in these words, is—that every thing which is desired by man, is desired for its own sake. The habit of going on with words, totally disjoined from ideas, must have been strong in this man to a degree of which the instances must be rare. Good God! almost all the things desired by man are desired for the sake of something else. You desire a horse for the sake of riding, a house for the sake of shelter, a fire for the sake of warmth, victuals for the sake of eating, clothes for the sake of wearing, a picture for the pleasure of seeing it, music for the pleasure of hearing it, a game of skill for the pleasure of playing, or the money which may be gained by it, a star and garter for the sake of shewing them.

He says, the cultivation of the dispositions leading to voluntary action, is desired for its own sake. Why, this is a case directly proving the absurdity of his proposition.

The cultivation of any thing is desirable only for the sake of the thing cultivated.

But let him say, that he means the disposition. We have seen, that in the case of a virtuous act this implies two ideas; the one called motive, the other intention. The motive is neither virtuous nor vicious. The intention, in the case of acts affecting others, is the intention of good to some one. The great question in moral philosophy is, why is the intention of good to others desirable? I answer that question, says Sir James. I affirm that it is desirable for its own sake. But philosophy asks for reasons. *Ipse dixit* it regards as a sign that reasons are not at hand.

An intention desirable for its own sake—what shadow of a meaning can belong to this? Why should one intention be more desirable than another—the intention of good to a man more than the intention of evil? It is so, Sir James might say; such is the fact. True: the fact is not disputed; but the question still remains, how the fact is to be accounted for. Sir James gives us an affirmation for an exposition. He affirms that the principle of virtue is, like an instinct, inherent in human nature; and incapable of farther analysis. This is easy philosophizing. And not more easy than unsatisfactory. It is the figment of a moral sense in disguise, which, like the taste of sweet and bitter, not only gives us the perception of good and evil, but gives us a relish for the one, and a disrelish for the other.

We do not relish being put off with the assignment of an occult cause. We ask why moral acts are esteemed? The answer here is, because we are so made as to esteem them. Is this any thing more than a mere assertion of the fact, that we do esteem them? But the assertion of a fact is not the explanation of it. And so fares it with the moral sense.

Besides the desire of cultivating the dispositions which please us, we desire to perform the actions which please

us. This is useful information; as if it were possible to do otherwise. The very definition of a free agent is, that he acts as he pleases.

A desire to perform an action is not separable from the performance. There is no performance without desire of performing. And there is no desire, without performance. To say, you desire to perform, and do not, is a contradiction in terms It is to say you desire to perform, but do not desire to perform. You cannot fail to perform but by not desiring to perform; if the act is within your competence; of which sort of acts exclusively we are at present speaking.

This performing, then, which is in fact desiring to perform (desiring to lift the arm is in truth the act, the muscular contraction takes place we know not how), is desirable for its own sake. A desire is desirable. This is merely to say that a desire is a desire. A desire is what? A pleasurable idea. A desire is desirable, is simply this—a pleasurable idea is pleasurable. Profound instruction.

Go back to the desire of the dispositions we like. A desire is a pleasurable idea. The disposition we like is a series of pleasurable ideas. A desire of a series of pleasurable ideas, *i.e.* the pleasurable idea of a series of pleasurable ideas—does this say any thing more than that a pleasurable series is pleasurable? But that is merely a statement of the fact; and a bad way of stating the fact is not an explanation of it.

Once more, then, Sir James's telling us, that the dispositions we like, and the actions we like, are likeable for their own sakes, is telling us what he has given us no reason for believing.

The next thing we are told by Sir James is, that "the gratification of these desires," (*i.e.* the desires of cultivating the disposition, and performing the actions which we like), "requires the use of no means."

Sir James is an obscure writer. It is not obvious what

he means by this assertion. To gratify the desire of food, means must be used to get the food. To gratify the desire of wealth, means must be used to get the wealth. To gratify the desire of wisdom, means must be used to acquire it. But to gratify the desire of cultivating a disposition, no means are to be used. Is the meaning this—that it is enough to desire the disposition, and immediately the disposition is formed? Is the desire the immediate, and all-sufficient cause of the disposition? If so, the moment a man desires to have a good disposition, he has it. But this is not true. The acquiring a good disposition is a slow process, requiring great care and pains, that is, the use of many means.

With regard to the desire of performing an action, if it be the simple, elementary action, the voluntary movement of some part of the body; there are no means in this case, since the desire is the immediate cause of the movement. I desire to lift my arm. The arm rises: a fixed and immediate sequence. But what information is there in this? It is the process known to all men, under the name of volition. Volition needs no means. Why? Because it is itself the means; the sole, and all sufficient means.

Let us see what follows. "Nothing (unless it be a volition) is interposed between the desire and the voluntary act." What does Sir James suppose a volition to be? If it can be interposed between the desire and the act; Sir James contradicts his own doctrine, that the desire requires no means. The volition is a necessary medium or means.

"Between the desire and the voluntary act." Is the desire of the cultivation of the disposition, the desire of the disposition? or is it something else? The cultivation of the disposition is in reality the means for acquiring the disposition. The matter of fact then is,

that the disposition alone is the object of desire, not the cultivation, which would not be performed, but from the desire of the disposition.

Sir James's denial of the need of means for the gratification of his two desires, is, therefore, with respect to one of them, false, the other, insignificant.

APPENDIX B.—(See p. 243.)

1. HAVING thus again premised an already often repeated warning, it remains that we should offer a few observations on the questions so understood, which naturally occur on the consideration of Dr. Brown's argument in support of the proposition, that moral approbation is not only in its mature state independent of and superior to any other principle of human nature, regarding which there is no dispute, but that its origin is altogether inexplicable, and that its existence is an ultimate fact in mental science. Though these observations are immediately occasioned by the perusal of Brown, they are yet, in the main, of a general nature, and might have been made without reference to any particular writer.

2. The term *Suggestion*, which might be inoffensive in describing merely intellectual associations, becomes peculiarly unsuitable when it is applied to those combinations of thought with emotion, and to those unions of feeling, which compose the emotive nature of man. Its common sense of a sign *recalling* the thing signified, always embroils the new sense vainly forced upon it. No one can help owning, that if it were consistently pursued, so as that we were to speak of *suggesting a feeling or passion*, the language would be universally thought absurd. To suggest love or hatred is a mode of expression so manifestly incongruous, that most readers would choose to understand it as suggesting reflections on the subject of these passages. *Suggest* would not be understood by

any common reason as synonymous with *revive* or *rekindle*. Defects of the same sort may indeed be found in the parallel phrases of most if not all philosophers, and all of them proceed from the same source,—namely, the erroneous but prevalent notion, that the law of association produces only such a close union of a thought and a feeling, as gives one the power of reviving the other; instead of the truth, that it forms them into a new compound, in which the properties of the component parts are no longer discoverable, and which may itself become a substantive principle of human nature. They supposed the condition, produced by its power, to resemble that of material substances in a state of mechanical diffusion; whereas in reality it may be better likened to a chemical combination of the same substances, from which a totally new product arises. The language involves a confusion of the question which relates to the *origin* of the principles of human activity, with the other and far more important question which relates to their *nature*; and as soon as this distinction is hidden, the theorist is either betrayed into the selfish system by a desire of clearness and simplicity, or tempted to the needless multiplication of ultimate facts by mistaken anxiety for what he supposes to be the guards of our social and moral nature. The defect is common to Brown with his predecessors, but in him less excusable; for he saw the truth and recoiled from it.

3. It is the main defect of the term *association* itself, that it does not, without long habit, convey the notion of a perfect union, but rather leads to that of a combination which may be dissolved, if not at pleasure, at least with the help of care and exertion; which is utterly and dangerously false in the important cases where such unions are considered as constituting the most essential principles of human nature. Men can no more dissolve these unions than they can disuse their habit of judging of distance by the eye, and often by the ear. But *sugges-*

tion implies, that what suggests is separate from what is suggested, and consequently negatives that unity in an active principle which the whole analogy of nature, as well as our own direct consciousness, shews to be perfectly compatible with its origin in composition.

4. Large concessions are, in the first place, to be remarked, which must be stated, because they very much narrow the matter in dispute. Those who, before Brown, contended against beneficial tendency as the standard of morality, have either shut their eyes on the connection of virtue with general utility; or carelessly and obscurely allowed, without further remark, a connection which is at least one of the most remarkable and important of ethical facts. He acts more boldly, and avowedly discusses "the relation of virtue to utility." He was compelled by that discussion to make those concessions which so much abridge this controversy. "Utility and virtue are so related, that there is perhaps no action generally felt to be virtuous, which it would not be beneficial that all men in similar circumstances should imitate." * "In every case of benefit or injury willingly done, there arise certain emotions of moral approbation or disapprobation." † "The intentional produce of evil, as pure evil, is always hated; and that of good, as pure good, always loved." ‡ All virtuous acts are thus admitted to be universally beneficial; morality and the general benefit are acknowledged always to coincide. It is hard to say, then, why they should not be reciprocally tests of each other, though in a very different way;—the virtuous

* Lectures, vol. iv. p. 45. The unphilosophical word "perhaps" must be struck out of the proposition, unless the whole be considered as a mere conjecture. It limits no affirmation, but destroys it, by converting it into a guess. See the like concession, vol. iv. p. 33. with some words interlarded, which betray a sort of reluctance and fluctuation, indicative of the difficulty with which Brown struggled to withhold his assent from truths which he unreasonably dreaded.

† Ibid. vol. iii. p. 567.

‡ Ibid. vol. iii. p. 621.

feelings, fitted as they are by immediate appearance, by quick and powerful action, being sufficient tests of morality in the moment of action, and for all practical purposes; while the consideration of tendency to general happiness, a more obscure and slowly discoverable quality, should be applied in general reasoning, as a test of the sentiments and dispositions themselves. It has been thus employed, and no proof has been attempted, that it has ever deceived those who used it in the proper place. It has uniformly served to justify our moral constitution, and to show how reasonable it is for us to be guided in action by our higher feelings. At all events, it should be, but has not been considered, that from these concessions alone it follows, that beneficial tendency is at least one constant property of virtue. Is not this, in effect, an admission that beneficial tendency does distinguish virtuous acts and dispositions from those which we call vicious? If the criterion be incomplete or delusive, let its faults be specified, and let some other quality be pointed out, which, either singly or in combination with beneficial tendency, may more perfectly indicate the distinction.

5. But let us not be assailed by arguments which leave untouched its value as a test, and are in truth directed only against its fitness as an *immediate* incentive and guide to right action. To those who contend for its use in the latter character, it must be left to defend, if they can, so untenable a position. But all others must regard as pure sophistry the use of arguments against it as a test, which really shew nothing more than its acknowledged unfitness to be a motive.

6. When voluntary benefit and voluntary injury are pointed out as the main, if not the sole objects of moral approbation and disapprobation,—when we are told truly, that the production of good, as good, is always loved, and that of evil, as such, always hated,—can we require a more clear, short, and unanswerable proof, that bene-

ficial tendency is an essential quality of virtue? It is indeed an evidently necessary consequence of this statement, that if benevolence be amiable in itself, our affection for it must increase with its extent; and that no man can be in a perfectly right state of mind, who, if he consider general happiness at all, is not ready to acknowledge that a good man must regard it as being in its own nature the most desirable of all objects, however the constitution and circumstances of human nature may render it unfit or impossible to pursue it *directly* as the object of life. It is at the same time apparent that no such man can consider any habitual disposition, clearly discerned to be in its whole result at variance with general happiness, as not unworthy of being cultivated, or as not fit to be rooted out. It is manifest that, if it were otherwise, he would cease to be benevolent. As soon as we conceive the sublime idea of a Being who not only foresees, but commands, all the consequences of the actions of all voluntary agents, this scheme of reasoning appears far more clear. In such a case if our moral sentiments remain the same, they compel us to attribute his whole government of the world to benevolence. The consequence is as necessary as in any process of reason; for if our moral nature be supposed, it will appear self-evident, that it is as much impossible for us to love and revere such a Being, if we ascribe to him a mixed or imperfect benevolence, as to believe the most positive contradiction in terms. Now, as religion consists in that love and reverence, it is evident that it cannot subsist without a belief in benevolence as the sole principle of divine government. It is nothing to tell us that this is not a process of reasoning, or, to speak more exactly, that the first propositions are assumed. The first propositions in every discussion relating to intellectual operations must likewise be assumed. Conscience is not reason, but it is not less an essential part of human nature than reason. Principles which are essential to all its opera-

tions are as much entitled to immediate and implicit assent, as those principles which stand in the same relation to the reasoning faculties. The laws prescribed by a benevolent Being to his creatures must necessarily be founded on the principle of promoting their happiness. It would be singular indeed, if the proofs of the goodness of God, legible in every part of nature, should not, above all others, be most discoverable and conspicuous in the beneficial tendency of his moral laws.

7. But we are asked, if tendency to general welfare be the standard of virtue, why is it not always present to the contemplation of every man who does or prefers a virtuous action? Must not utility be in that case "the felt essence of virtue?" * Why are other ends, besides general happiness, fit to be morally pursued?

8. These questions, which are all founded on that confusion of the *theory of actions* with the theory of *sentiments*, against which the reader was so early warned,† might be dismissed with no more than a reference to that distinction from the forgetfulness of which they have arisen. By those advocates of utility, indeed, who hold it to be a necessary part of their system, that some glimpse at least of tendency to personal or general well-being is an essential part of the motives which render an action virtuous, these questions cannot be satisfactorily answered. Against such they are arguments of irresistible force; but against the doctrine itself, rightly understood and justly bounded, they are altogether powerless. The reason why there may, and must be, many ends morally more fit to be pursued in practice than general happiness, is plainly to be found in the limited capacity of man. A perfectly good Being, who foresees and commands all the consequences of action, cannot indeed be conceived by us to have any other end in view than general well-being. Why evil exists under that perfect government,

* Lectures, vol. iv. p. 38. † See *supra*, p. 8—10.

is a question towards the solution of which the human understanding can scarcely advance a single step. But all who hold the evil to exist only for good, and own their inability to explain why or how, are perfectly exempt from any charge of inconsistency in their obedience to the dictates of their moral nature. The measure of the faculties of man renders it absolutely necessary for him to have many other practical ends; the pursuit of all of which is moral, when it actually tends to general happiness, though that last end never entered into the contemplation of the agent. It is impossible for us to calculate the effects of a single action, any more than the chances of a single life. But let it not be hastily concluded, that the calculation of consequences is impossible in moral subjects. To calculate the general tendency of every sort of human action, is a possible, easy, and common operation. The general good effects of temperance, prudence, fortitude, justice, benevolence, gratitude, veracity, fidelity,—of the affections of kindred, and of love for our country,—are the subjects of calculations which, taken as generalities, are absolutely unerring. They are founded on a larger and firmer basis of more uniform experience, than any of those ordinary calculations which govern prudent men in the whole business of life. An appeal to these daily and familiar transactions furnishes at once a decisive answer, both to those advocates of utility who represent the consideration of it as a necessary ingredient in virtuous motives, as well as moral approbation, and to those opponents who turn the unwarrantable inferences of unskilful advocates into proofs of the absurdity into which the doctrine leads.

9. The cultivation of all the habitual sentiments from which the various classes of virtuous actions flow—the constant practice of such actions—the strict observance of rules in all that province of Ethics which can be subjected to rules—the watchful care of all the outworks of every part of duty, of that descending series of useful

habits which, being securities to virtue, become themselves virtues,—are so many ends which it is absolutely necessary for man to pursue and to seek for their own sake.

10. "I saw D'Alembert," says a very late writer, "congratulate a young man very coldly, who brought him a solution of a problem. The young man said, 'I have done this in order to have a seat in the Academy.' 'Sir,' answered D'Alembert, 'with such dispositions you never will earn one. Science must be loved for its own sake, and not for the advantage to be derived. No other principle will enable a man to make progress in the sciences.'"* It is singular that D'Alembert should not perceive the extensive application of this truth to the whole nature of man. No man can make progress in a virtue who does not seek it for its own sake. No man is a friend, a lover of his country, a kind father, a dutiful son, who does not consider the cultivation of affection and the performance of duty in all these cases respectively as incumbent on him for their own sake, and not for the advantage to be derived from them. Whoever serves another with a view of advantage to himself is universally acknowledged not to act from affection. But the more immediate application of this truth to our purpose is, that in the case of those virtues which are the means of cultivating and preserving other virtues, it is necessary to acquire love and reverence for the secondary virtues for their own sake, without which they never will be effectual means of sheltering and strengthening those intrinsically higher qualities to which they are appointed to minister. Every moral act must be considered as an end, and men must banish from their practice the regard to the most naturally subordinate duty as a means. Those who are perplexed by the supposition that secondary virtues, making up by the *extent* of their bene-

* Memoires de Montlosier, vol. i. p. 50.

ficial tendency for what in each particular instance they may want in *magnitude*, may become of as great importance as the primary virtues themselves, would do well to consider a parallel though very homely case. A house is useful for many purposes: many of these purposes are in themselves, for the time, more important than shelter. The destruction of the house may, nevertheless become a greater evil than the defeat of several of these purposes, because it is permanently convenient, and indeed necessary to the execution of most of them. A floor is made for warmth, for dryness—to support tables, chairs, beds, and all the household implements which contribute to accommodation and to pleasure. The floor is valuable only as a means; but, as the only means by which many ends are attained, it may be much more valuable than some of them. The table might be, and generally is, of more valuable timber than the floor; but the workmen who should for that reason take more pains in making the table strong than the floor secure, would not long be employed by customers of common sense. The connection of that part of morality which regulates the intercourse of the sexes with benevolence, affords the most striking instance of the very great importance which may belong to a virtue, in itself secondary, but on which the general cultivation of the highest virtues permanently depends. Delicacy and modesty may be thought chiefly worthy of cultivation, because they guard purity; but they must be loved for their own sake, without which they cannot flourish. Purity is the sole school of domestic fidelity, and domestic fidelity is the only nursery of the affections between parents and children, from children towards each other, and, through these affections, of all the kindness which renders the world habitable. At each step in the progress, the appropriate end must be loved for its own sake; and it is easy to see how the only means of sowing the seeds of benevolence, in all its forms, may become of

far greater importance than many of the modifications and exertions even of benevolence itself. To those who will consider this subject, it will not long seem strange that the sweetest and most gentle affections grow up only under the apparently cold and dark shadow of stern duty. The obligation is strengthened, not weakened, by the consideration that it arises from human imperfection; which only proves it to be founded on the nature of man. It is enough that the pursuit of all these separate ends leads to general well-being, the promotion of which is the final purpose of the creation.

11. The last and most specious argument against beneficial tendency, even as a test, is conveyed in the question, why moral approbation is not bestowed on every thing beneficial, instead of being confined, as it confessedly is, to voluntary acts. It may plausibly be said, that the establishment of the beneficial tendency of all those voluntary acts which are the objects of moral approbation is not sufficient, since, if such tendency be the standard, it ought to follow, that whatever is useful should also be morally approved. To answer, as has before been done,* that experience gradually limits moral approbation and disapprobation to voluntary acts, by teaching us that they influence the will, but are wholly wasted if they be applied to any other object,—though the fact be true, and contributes somewhat to the result, is certainly not enough. It is at best a partial solution. Perhaps, on reconsideration, it is entitled only to a secondary place. To seek a foundation for universal, ardent, early, and immediate feelings, in processes of an intellectual nature, has, since the origin of philosophy, been the grand error of ethical inquirers into human nature. To seek for such a foundation in association, an early and insensible process, which confessedly mingles itself with the composition of our first and simplest

* See *supra*, p. 99, 100.

feelings, and which is common to both parts of our nature, is not liable to the same animadversion. If conscience be uniformly produced by the regular and harmonious co-operation of many processes of association, the objection is in reality a challenge to produce a complete theory of it, founded on that principle, by exhibiting such a full account of all these processes as may satisfactorily explain why it proceeds thus far and no farther. This would be a very arduous attempt, and perhaps it may be premature. But something may be more modestly tried towards an *outline*, which, though it might leave many particulars unexplained, may justify a reasonable expectation that they are not incapable of explanation; and may even now assign such reasons for the limitation of approbation to voluntary acts, as may convert the objection derived from that fact into a corroboration of the doctrines to which it has been opposed as an insurmountable difficulty. Such an attempt will naturally lead to the close of the present Dissertation. The attempt has indeed been already made,* but not without great apprehensions on the part of the author that he has not been clear enough, especially in those parts which appeared to himself to owe most to his own reflection. He will now endeavour, at the expense of some repetition, to be more satisfactory.

12. There must be primary pleasures, pains, and even appetites, which arise from no prior state of mind, and which, if explained at all, can be derived only from bodily organization; for if there were not, there could be no secondary desires. What the number of the underived principles may be, is a question to which the answers of philosophers have been extremely various, and of which the consideration is not necessary to our present purpose. The rules of philosophizing, however, require that causes should not be multiplied without necessity. Of two

* See *supra*, p. 82-84, 113-118.

explanations, therefore, which give an equally satisfactory account of appearances, that theory is manifestly to be preferred which supposes the smaller number of ultimate and inexplicable principles. This maxim, it is true, is subject to three indispensable conditions. 1. That the principles employed in the explanation should be known really to exist: in which consists the main distinction between hypothesis and theory. Gravity is a principle universally known to exist; ether and a nervous fluid are mere suppositions. 2. That these principles should be known to produce effects *like* those which are ascribed to them in the theory. This is a further distinction between hypothesis and theory; for there are an infinite number of degrees of *likeness*, from the faint resemblances which have led some to fancy that the functions of the nerves depend on electricity, to the remarkable coincidences between the appearances of projectiles on earth, and the movements of the heavenly bodies, which constitutes the Newtonian system; a theory now perfect, though exclusively founded on analogy, and in which one of the classes of phenomena brought together by it is not the subject of direct experience. 3. That it should correspond, if not with all the facts to be explained, at least with so great a majority of them as to render it highly probable that means will in time be found of reconciling it to all. It is only on this ground that the Newtonian system justly claimed the title of a legitimate theory during that long period when it was unable to explain many celestial appearances, before the labours of a century, and the genius of Laplace, at length completed the theory, by adapting it to all the phenomena. A theory may be just before it is complete.

13. In the application of these canons to the theory which derives most of the principles of human action from the transfer of a small number of pleasures, perhaps organic, by the law of association to a vast variety of new objects, it cannot be denied; 1st. That it satisfies the

first of the above conditions, inasmuch as association is *really* one of the laws of human nature; 2dly. That it also satisfies the second, for association certainly produces effects *like* those which are referred to it by this theory, otherwise there would be no secondary desires, no acquired relishes and dislikes;—facts universally acknowledged, which are and can be explained only by the principle called by Hobbes *mental discourse*;—by Locke, Hume, Hartley, Condillac, and the majority of speculators, as well as in common speech, *association*;—by Tucker, *translation*;—and by Brown, *suggestion*. The facts generally referred to the principle *resemble* those which are claimed for it by the theory in this important particular, that in both cases equally, pleasure becomes attached to perfectly new things, so that the derivative desires become perfectly independent on the primary. The great dissimilarity of these two classes of passions has been supposed to consist in this, that the former always regards the interests of the individual, while the latter regards the welfare of others. The philosophical world has been almost entirely divided into two sects; the partisans of selfishness, comprising mostly all the predecessors of Butler, and the greater part of his successors; and the advocates of benevolence, who have generally contended that the reality of disinterestedness depends on its being a *primary principle*. Enough has been said by Butler against the more fatal heresy of selfishness. Something has already been said against the error of the advocates of disinterestedness, in the progress of this attempt to develope ethical truths historically, in the order in which inquiry and controversy brought them out with increasing brightness. The analogy of the material world is indeed faint, and often delusive; yet we dare not utterly reject that on which the whole technical language of mental and moral science is necessarily grounded. The whole creation teems with instances where the most powerful agents and the most lasting bodies are the acknowledged

results of the composition, sometimes of a few, often of many elements. These compounds often in their turn become the elements of other substances; and it is with them that we are conversant chiefly in the pursuits of knowledge, solely in the concerns of life. No man ever fancied, that because they were compounds, they were therefore less *real*. It is impossible to confound them with any of the separate elements which contribute towards their formation. But a much more close resemblance presents itself. Every secondary desire, or acquired relish, involves in it a transfer of pleasure to something which was before indifferent or disagreeable. Is the new pleasure the less real for being acquired? Is it not often preferred to the original enjoyment? Are not many of these secondary pleasures indestructible? Do not many of them survive primary appetites? Lastly, the important principle of regard to our own general welfare, which disposes us to prefer it to immediate pleasure, unfortunately called self-love (as if, in any intelligible sense of the term *love*, it were possible for a man to love himself), is perfectly intelligible if its origin be ascribed to association, but utterly incomprehensible if it be considered as prior to the appetites and desires, which alone furnish it with materials. As happiness consists of satisfactions, self-love presupposes appetites and desires which are to be satisfied. If the order of time were important, the affections are formed at an earlier period than many self-regarding passions, and they always precede the formation of self-love.

14. Many of the later advocates of the disinterested system, though recoiling from an apparent approach to the selfishness into which the purest of their antagonists had occasionally fallen, were gradually obliged to make concessions to the derivative system, though clogged with the contradictory assertion, that it was only a refinement of selfishness: and we have seen that Brown, the last and not the least in genius of them, has nearly abandoned the

greater, though not indeed the most important part of the territory in dispute, and scarcely contends for any underived principle but the moral faculty.

15. In this state of opinion among the very small number in Great Britain who still preserve some remains of a taste for such speculations, it is needless here to trace the application of the law of association to the formation of the secondary desires, whether private or social. For our present purposes, the explanation of their origin may be assumed to be satisfactory. In what follows, it must, however, be steadily borne in mind, that this concession involves an admission that the pleasure derived from low objects may be transferred to the most pure; that from a part of a self-regarding appetite such a pleasure may become a portion of a perfectly disinterested desire; and that the disinterested nature and absolute independence of the latter are not in the slightest degree impaired by the consideration, that it is formed by one of those grand mental processes to which the formation of the other habitual states of the human mind have been, with great probability, ascribed.

16.—1. When the social affections are thus formed, they are naturally followed in every instance by the will to do whatever can promote their object. 2. Compassion excites a voluntary determination to do whatever relieves the person pitied. 3. The like process must occur in every case of gratitude, generosity, and affection. 4. Nothing so uniformly follows the kind disposition as the act of will, because it is the only means by which the benevolent desire can be gratified. 5. The result of what Brown justly calls "a finer analysis," shews a mental contiguity of the affection to the volition to be much closer than appears on a coarser examination of this part of our nature. 6. No wonder, then, that the strongest association, the most active power of reciprocal suggestion, should subsist between them. 7. As all the affections are delightful, so the volitions, voluntary acts which are

the only means of their gratification, become agreeable objects of contemplation of the mind. 8. The habitual disposition to perform them is felt in ourselves, and observed in others, with satisfaction. 9. As these feelings become more lively, the absence of them may be viewed in ourselves with a pain, in others with an alienation capable of indefinite increase. 10. They become entirely independent sentiments; still, however, receiving constant supplies of nourishment from their parent affections, which, in well-balanced minds, reciprocally strengthen each other; unlike the unkind passions, which are constantly engaged in the most angry conflicts of civil war. 11. In this state we desire to experience these *beneficent volitions*, to cultivate a disposition towards them, and to do every correspondent voluntary act. 12. They are for their own sake the objects of desire. 13. They thus constitute a large portion of those emotions, desires, and affections, which regard certain dispositions of the mind and determinations of the will as their sole and ultimate end. 14. These are what are called the moral sense, the moral sentiments, or best, though most simply, by the ancient name of *Conscience;* which has the merit, in our language, of being applied to no other purpose, which peculiarly marks the strong working of these feelings on conduct, and which, from its solemn and sacred character, is well adapted to denote the venerable authority of the highest principle of human nature.

17. Nor is this all. It has already been seen that not only sympathy with the sufferer, but indignation against the wrong-doer, contributes a large and important share towards the moral feelings. We are angry at those who disappoint our wish for the happiness of others. We make the resentment of the innocent person wronged our own. Our moderate anger approves all well-proportioned punishment of the wrong-doer. We hence approve those dispositions and actions of voluntary agents which pro-

mote such suitable punishment, and disapprove those which hinder its infliction or destroy its effect; at the head of which may be placed that excess of punishment beyond the average feelings of good men which turns the indignation of the calm by-stander against the culprit into pity. In this state, when anger is duly moderated,—when it is proportioned to the wrong,—when it is detached from personal considerations,—when *dispositions and actions are its ultimate objects*,—it becomes a sense of justice, and is so purified as to be fitted to be a new element of conscience. There is no part of morality which is so *directly* aided by a conviction of the necessity of its observance to the general interest, as justice. The connection between them is discoverable by the most common understanding. All public deliberations profess the public welfare to be their object; all laws propose it as their end. This calm principle of public utility serves to mediate between the sometimes repugnant feelings which arise in the punishment of criminals, by repressing undue pity on one hand, and reducing resentment to its proper level on the other. Hence the unspeakable importance of criminal laws as a part of the moral education of mankind. Whenever they carefully conform to the moral sentiments of the age and country,—when they are withheld from approaching the limits within which the disapprobation of good men would confine punishment, they contribute in the highest degree to increase the ignominy of crimes, to make men recoil from the first suggestions of criminality, and to nourish and mature the sense of justice, which lends new vigour to the conscience with which it has been united.

18. Other contributary streams present themselves. Qualities which are necessary to virtue, but may be subservient to vice, may, independently of that excellence or of that defect, be in themselves admirable. Courage, energy, decision, are of this nature. In their wild state they are often savage and destructive. When they are

tamed by the society of the affections, and trained up in obedience to the moral faculty, they become virtues of the highest order, and, by their name of *magnanimity*, proclaim the general sense of mankind that they are the characteristic qualities of a great soul. They retain whatever was admirable in their unreclaimed state, together with all that they borrow from their new associate and their high ruler. Their nature, it must be owned, is prone to evil; but this propensity does not hinder them from being rendered capable of being ministers of good, in a state where the gentler virtues require to be vigorously guarded against the attacks of daring depravity. It is thus that the strength of the well-educated elephant is sometimes employed in vanquishing the fierceness of the tiger, and sometimes used as a means of defence against the shock of his brethren of the same species. The delightful contemplation, however, of these qualities, when purely applied, becomes one of the sentiments of which the dispositions and actions of voluntary agents are the direct and final object. By this resemblance they are associated with the other moral principles, and with them contribute to form Conscience, which, as the master faculty of the soul, levies such large contributions on every province of human nature.

19. It is important, in this point of view, to consider also the moral approbation which is undoubtedly bestowed *on those dispositions and actions of voluntary agents* which terminate in their own satisfaction, security, and well-being. They have been called duties to ourselves, as absurdly as a regard to our own greatest happiness is called self-love. But it cannot be reasonably doubted, that intemperance, improvidence, timidity, even when considered only in relation to the individual, are not only regretted as imprudent, but blamed as morally wrong. It was excellently observed by Aristotle, that a man is not commended as *temperate*, so long as it costs him efforts of *self-denial* to persevere in the practice of tem-

perance, but only when *he prefers that virtue for its own sake.* He is not meek, nor brave, as long as the most vigorous self-command is necessary to bridle his anger or his fear. On the same principle, he may be judicious or prudent; but he is not benevolent if he confers benefits with a view to his own greatest happiness. In like manner, it is ascertained by experience, that all the masters of science and of art—that all those who have successfully pursued truth and knowledge—love them for their own sake, without regard to the generally imaginary dower of interest, or even to the dazzling crown which fame may place on their heads.* But it may still be reasonably asked, why these useful qualities are morally improved, and how they become capable of being combined with those public and disinterested sentiments which principally constitute conscience? The answer is, because they are entirely conversant with volitions and voluntary actions, and in that respect resemble the other constituents of conscience, with which they are thereby fitted to mingle and coalesce. Like those other principles, they may be detached from what is personal and outward, and fixed on the dispositions and actions, which are the only means of promoting their ends. The sequence of these principles and acts of will becomes so frequent, that the association between both may be as firm as in the former cases. All those sentiments of which the final object is a state of the will, become thus intimately

* See *the Pursuit of Knowledge under Difficulties*, a discourse forming the first part of the third volume of the *Library of Entertaining Knowledge*, London, 1829. The author of this Essay, for it can be no other than Mr. Brougham, will by others be placed at the head of those who, in the midst of arduous employments, and surrounded by all the allurements of society, yet find leisure for exerting the unwearied vigour of their minds in every mode of rendering permanent service to the human species; more especially in spreading a love of knowledge, and diffusing useful truth among all classes of men. These voluntary occupations deserve our attention still less as examples of prodigious power than as proofs of an intimate conviction, which binds them by unity of purpose with his public duties, that (to use the almost dying words of an excellent person) "man can neither be happy without virtue, nor actively virtuous without liberty, nor securely free without rational knowledge." (Close of Sir W. Jones's last *Discourse to the Asiatic Society of Calcutta.*)

and inseparably blended; and of that perfect state of solution (if such words may be allowed) the result is *Conscience*—the judge and arbiter of human conduct; which, though it does not supersede *ordinary motives* of virtuous feelings and habits, which are the ordinary motives of good actions, yet exercises a lawful authority even over them, and ought to blend with them. Whatsoever actions and dispositions are approved by conscience acquire the name of virtues or duties: they are pronounced to deserve commendation; and we are justly considered as under a moral *obligation* to practise the actions and cultivate the dispositions.

20. The coalition of the private and public feelings is very remarkable in two points of view, from which it seems hitherto to have been scarcely observed. *First*, It illustrates very forcibly all that has been here offered to prove, that the peculiar character of the moral sentiments consists in their *exclusive reference to states of will*, and that every feeling which has that quality, when it is purified from all admixture with different objects, becomes capable of being absorbed into Conscience, and of being assimilated to it, so as to become a part of it. For no feelings can be more unlike each other in their object than the private and the social; and yet, as both employ voluntary actions as their sole immediate means, both may be transferred by association to states of the will, in which case they are transmuted into moral sentiments. No example of the coalition of feelings in their general nature less widely asunder, could afford so much support to this position. *Secondly*, By raising qualities useful to ourselves to the rank of virtues, it throws a strong light on the relation of virtue to individual interest; very much as justice illustrates the relation of morality to general interest. The coincidence of morality with individual interest is an important truth in Ethics. It is most manifest in that part of Ethics which we are now considering. A calm regard to our general interest

is indeed a faint and infrequent motive of action. Its chief advantage is, that it is regular, and that its movements may be calculated. In deliberate conduct it may often be relied on, though perhaps never safely without knowledge of the whole temper and character. But in moral reasoning, at least, the coincidence is of unspeakable advantage. If there be a miserable man who has cold affections, a weak sense of justice, dim perceptions of right and wrong, and faint feelings of them;—if, still more wretched, his heart be constantly torn and devoured by malevolent passions—the vultures of the soul;—we have one resource still left, even in cases so dreadful. Even *he* still retains a human principle, to which we can speak. He must own that he has some wish for his own lasting welfare. We can prove to him that his state of mind is inconsistent with it. It may be impossible indeed to shew, that while his disposition continues the same, he can derive any enjoyment from the practice of virtue. But it may be most clearly shewn, that every advance in the amendment of that disposition is a step towards even temporal happiness. If he do not amend his character, we may compel him to own that he is at variance with himself, and offends against a principle of which even *he* must recognise the reasonableness.

21. The formation of Conscience from so many elements, and especially the combination of elements so unlike as the private desires and the social affections, early contributes to give it the appearance of that simplicity and independence which in its mature state really distinguish it. It becomes, from these circumstances, more difficult to distinguish its separate principles; and it is impossible to exhibit them in separate action. The affinity of these various passions to each other, which consists in their having no object but *states of the will*, is the only common property which strikes the mind. Hence the facility with which the general terms, first probably limited to the relations between ourselves and

others, are gradually extended to all voluntary acts and dispositions. Prudence and temperance become the objects of moral approbation. When imprudence is immediately disapproved by the by-stander, without deliberate consideration of its consequences, it is not only displeasing, as being pernicious, but it is blamed as *wrong*, though with a censure so much inferior to that bestowed on inhumanity and injustice, as may justify those writers who use the milder term *improper*. At length, when the general words come to signify the objects of moral approbation, and the reverse, they denote merely the power to excite feelings which are as independent as if they were underived, and which coalesce the more perfectly, because they are detached from objects so various and unlike, as to render their return to their primitive state very difficult.

22. The question,* why we do not morally approve the useful qualities of actions which are altogether *involuntary*, may now be shortly and satisfactorily answered: because conscience is in perpetual contact, as it were, with all the dispositions and actions of *voluntary* agents, and is by that means indissolubly associated with them exclusively. It has a direct action on the will, and a constant mental contiguity to it. It has no such mental contiguity to involuntary changes. It has never perhaps been observed, that an operation of the conscience precedes all acts deliberate enough to be in the highest sense voluntary, and does so as much when it is defeated as when it prevails. In either case the association is repeated. It extends to the whole of the active man. All passions have a definite outward object to which they tend, and a limited sphere within which they act. But conscience has no object but a state of will; and as an act of will is the sole means of gratifying any passion, conscience is co-extensive with the whole man, and with-

* See *supra*, p. 85.

out encroachment curbs or aids every feeling, even within the peculiar province of that feeling itself. As will is the universal means, conscience, which regards will, must be a universal principle. As nothing is interposed between conscience and the will when the mind is in its healthy state, the dictate of conscience is followed by the determination of the will, with a promptitude and exactness which very naturally is likened to the obedience of an inferior to the lawful commands of those whom he deems to be rightfully placed over him. It therefore seems clear, that on the theory which has been attempted, moral approbation must be limited to voluntary operations, and conscience must be universal, independent, and commanding.

23. One remaining difficulty may perhaps be objected to the general doctrines of this Dissertation, though it does not appear at any time to have been urged against other modifications of the same principle. "If moral approbation," it may be said, "involve no perception of beneficial tendency, whence arises the coincidence between that principle and the moral sentiments?" It may seem at first sight, that such a theory rests the foundation of morals upon a coincidence altogether mysterious, and apparently capricious and fantastic. Waiving all other answers, let us at once proceed to that which seems conclusive. It is true that conscience rarely contemplates so distant an object as the welfare of all sentient beings. But to what point is every one of its elements directed? What, for instance, is the aim of all the social affections? Nothing but the production of larger or smaller masses of happiness among those of our fellow-creatures who are the objects of these affections. In every case these affections promote happiness, as far as their foresight and their power extend. What can be more conducive, or even necessary, to the being and *well-being* of society, than the rules of justice? Are not the angry passions themselves, as far as they are ministers of morality, employed

in removing hinderances to the *welfare* of ourselves and others, which is indirectly promoting it? The private passions terminate indeed in the happiness of the individual, which, however, is a part of general happiness, and the part over which we have most power. Every principle of which conscience is composed has some portion of happiness for its object. To that point they all converge. General happiness is not indeed one of the natural objects of conscience, because our voluntary acts are not felt and perceived to affect it. But how small a step is left for reason. It only casts up the items of the account. It has only to discover that the acts of those who labour to promote separate portions of happiness must increase the amount of the whole. It may be truly said, that if observation and experience did not clearly ascertain that beneficial tendency is the constant attendant and mark of all virtuous dispositions and actions, the same great truth would be revealed to us by the voice of conscience. The coincidence, instead of being arbitrary, arises necessarily from the laws of human nature, and the circumstances in which mankind are placed. We perform and approve virtuous actions, partly because conscience regards them as right, partly because we are prompted to them by good affections. All these affections contribute towards general well-being, though it were not necessary, nor would it be fit, that the agent should be distracted by the contemplation of that vast and remote object.

The various relations of conscience to religion we have already been led to consider on the principles of Butler, of Berkeley, of Paley, and especially of Hartley, who was led by his own piety to contemplate as the last and highest stage of virtue and happiness, a sort of self-annihilation, which, however unsuitable to the present condition of mankind, yet places in the strongest light the disinterested character of the system, of which it is a conceiveable though perhaps not attainable result. The

completeness and rigour acquired by conscience, when all its dictates are revered as the commands of a perfectly wise and good Being, are so obvious, that they cannot be questioned by any reasonable man, however extensive his incredulity may be. It is thus that conscience can add the warmth of an affection to the inflexibility of principle and habit. It is true that, in examining the evidence of the divine original of a religious system, in estimating an imperfect religion, or in comparing the demerits of religions of human origin, conscience must be the standard chiefly applied. But it follows with equal clearness, that those who have the happiness to find satisfaction and repose in divine revelation, are bound to consider all those precepts for the government of the will, delivered by it, which are manifestly universal, as the rules to which all their feelings and actions should conform. The true distinction between conscience and a taste for moral beauty has already been pointed out;* a distinction which, notwithstanding its simplicity, has been unobserved by philosophers, perhaps on account of the frequent cooperation and intermixture of the two feelings. Most speculators have either denied the existence of the taste, or kept it out of view in their theory, or exalted it to the place which is rightfully filled only by conscience. Yet it is perfectly obvious that, like all the other feelings called pleasures of imagination, it terminates in delightful contemplation, while the moral faculty always aims exclusively at voluntary action. Nothing can more clearly shew that this last quality is the characteristic of conscience, than its being thus found to distinguish that faculty from the sentiments which most nearly resemble it, most frequently attend it, and are most easily blended with it.—MACKINTOSH, *Dissert. Encyclop. Britan. Sect.* 7.

* See *supra*, p. 117, 118.

THE END.

ERRATA.

Page 19, line 4 from the bottom, for *physical* read *political.*
—— 26, line 8 from the bottom, for *told* read *tells.*
—— 33, last line, prefix *l* to the first word.
—— 85, line 6 from the top, for *sakes* read *sake.*
—— 108, line 12 from the top, for *general* read *generous.*
—— 109, in the note line, 2 from the bottom, for *action* read *active.*
—— 110, line 17 from the top, for *words* read *word.*
—— 118, first line, for *that* read *than.*
—— 133, line 7 from the bottom, for *interests* read *interest.*
—— 166, first line, for *tle* read *little.*
—— 173, line 13, dele *in* at the end of the line.
—— 181, line 7 from the bottom, dele *will.*
—— 199, line 2 from the bottom, for *alluded to*, read *attended to.*
—— 238, line 2 from the top, for *ennemies* read *ennemis.*
—— 344, line 8 from the top, for *Sir James's* read *Sir James.*
—— 355, line 14 from the top, for *causes* read *cause.*

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